

THE
ADVANTAGES
OF
DELIBERATION;
OR, THE
F O L L Y
OF
INDISCRETION.

The life of a libertine cannot be known without abhorrence, nor shared without danger of ruin.

The ADVENTURER.

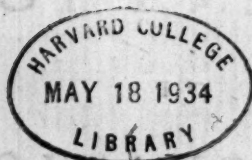
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for ROBINSON and ROBERTS,
No. 25, Paternoster-Row.

MDCC LXXII.



*Greenough fund
(2 vols)*

THE
ADVANTAGES
OF
DELIBERATION;
OR, THE
FOLLY of INDISCRETION.

LETTER I.

Lady CAMILLA MYRON to
Mrs. BURTON.

YOU may laugh; but it is my
fixed determination never to
marry: I have a thousand reasons
against matrimony, all which appear
to me so very sufficient, that I shall

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certainly keep clear of it for the remainder of my life.—I have acquainted Lord Stanfield over and over with my resolution ; but where is the man who will listen to any thing against himself, or hear disagreeable truths from a woman's lips ?

Lord Stanfield, from his rank and fortune, may, I grant, with great propriety, make pretensions to me : he is very handsome, and I will even venture so far as to say, that I *believe*—and no woman in an affair with a man can, I think, decently adopt a stronger expression—he loves me at present.—But who can assure me that he will love me always ?

You laugh again. You will probably tell me, after Richardson's Miss Howe, that I love ardours.—Do not all women love them, in some degree ? For *my* part, I honestly
eternally

confess, that I should not like to hear the man who had sworn to love me *eternally*, cry out in the language of the witty Doctor Young, with a sneer of self-satisfaction,

But say, my all, my mistress, and my friend
What day next week *eternity* shall end?

And I do as firmly believe that Lord Stanfield to be such a sort of a man, as I do positively declare that I never will marry him. What a long list could I give you of husbands, the veriest devils in nature, who were all, when lovers, violently loving, and the fondest creatures breathing.—O my dear, dear Burton, say no more, I beseech you, upon this subject: for, till the number of smiling faces with aching hearts in the married world are considerably lessened indeed, you cannot say any thing to the purpose upon it.

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You

You tell me, (because he is your relation, and because you have a high opinion of him) in order to make me yield to his lordship's importunities, that my person alone is sufficient to fix the most wavering heart.—Go, you flatterer—I know that I am handsome; but I know also, too well know, that the finest form nature ever produced, with all the glowing bloom of two and twenty into the bargain, will not long keep the fickle heart of inconstant man from wandering. For a while, perhaps, he may be in all his *ardours*, as you say; but how short, how very short, will be their duration!

You judge of *my* feelings, my dear Louisa, by your own—Still young, still lovely as you are, and possessed of talents superior to many of your sex, to the majority, I may say, you have
not

not the smallest idea of that soft attachment, that tender friendship which can alone promise permanent happiness between the two sexes. You, my dear, though faithful to your husband, and not in the least inclined to encourage any other man (I will venture to answer for your fidelity and your constancy) are not displeased with general admiration. Tenderness is not your predominant passion—You have a strong understanding, and yet you prefer the glitter and parade of life to the more endearing joys arising from the union of two hearts beating to each other in the same *key*, if I may borrow an expression from musick—I now should think such an union, without any interruption, the highest felicity this world can bestow. *You* have an exalted idea of *friendship*, I of—what

you call romantic *love*. In short, my dear Burton, *pride* is *your* foible, and *vanity* mine.

But perhaps I speak too plain.—Pardon me.—My aim is only to convince you that I cannot gratify my favourite passion by marrying Lord Stanfield.—I have too quick a sense of honour to permit him to entertain hopes which will never be accomplished. Let him know, therefore, when you see him, that he may be assured my refusal neither results from affected modesty, nor impertinent coquetry, but springs from a sincere resolution not to give up my freedom to any man living; especially to the man whom I do not love,

LET-

LETTER II.

From the SAME to the SAME.

AND so, my dear Burton, because you did not find yourself a sufficient advocate for your favourite, or rather believed that the eloquence of a pretty fellow is more prevailing on certain occasions, than the most persuasive eloquence of a woman, you sent Mr. Moyle to plead for his brother. But were neither you nor my lord afraid to trust him with me? Upon my word he is very handsome, does not want sense, and has an amazing diffidence for a young man of fashion.—“ He only presumed to make me a visit, as he was just arrived from Dublin, in order to do himself the honour of

B 4

letting

letting me know that Mrs. Burton was well." After this pretty compliment he artfully enough began to insinuate how happy Lord Stanfield and him both were in being related to you ; and then, by imperceptible degrees, introduced such a character of his Lordship, so heightened by the pencil of the brother and the friend, that, I confess, I thought him a masterly painter, though his portraits were *overcharged*. However, I kept my conjectures to myself ; and as there was apparently a great deal of sincerity in the warmth of his expressions about his brother, I could not treat him with incivility : you know what an enthusiast I am with regard to family-affection, yet, while I approved of his panegyric on my Lord, I at once gave him to understand

stand that I could not change my opinion of him.

He looked abashed at the ease and easiness with which I delivered these sentiments, and, after a melancholy pause, said, "Will Lady Camilla permit me to ask her a few questions?"

I smiled assent; I had not the heart to be angry; for he is, though a soldier, gentle as a western breeze on a bed of violet.

"What requisites, Madam, are wanting in his Lordship, for the attainment of your favour?"

"Possibly, Sir," said I, "to speak modestly, I am not deserving of his Lordship's--I want inclination."

"Can such a face, so beautiful, so sweetly-expressive of sensibility be accompanied with a heart indifferent to the joys of mutual love? joys of

the most transporting kind, and superior to any others to be conceived."

I smiled again—He expressed himself in so warm a manner that I supposed him to be perfectly well acquainted with the joys which he so feelingly described ; but I was mistaken.

He proceeded with his interrogations :

" You will allow, then, Madam, that my Lord has merit, though you are not *touched* by it ?"

" I will allow my Lord, said I, all the merit to which he is, I think, justly entitled; but I cannot ascribe to him any more."

" I wish your ladyship will not think me impertinent in desiring to be informed of the defects which you have discovered in my Lord's person or manners, which prevent him

him from being as agreeable in your eyes as he longs to be."

I now began, really, Louisa, to feel myself teased by him ; having, therefore an engagement upon my hands, and being also in a humour to be quite sincere--I replied, "Lord Stanfield's assiduities, Sir, might, certainly give pleasure to many women, but I have never been in the least affected by them ; and had they been ever so pleasing to me, my knowledge of his licentious principles would have hindered his agreeable qualifications from making any impression upon me."

" You give me, Madam, said he, such an enchanting proof of the excellency of your heart, while you justly condemn my brother's late principles (I say late, because he is now governed by more laudable ones) that

I can only pity my lord for not having always been as worthy of it as he is at present. Yet, surely, as he has not only sincerely repented of his errors, but renounced them for ever, he is entitled to some consideration from"——

"No consideration at all, Sir," replied I briskly, interrupting him: "I have long determined to give not the slightest encouragement to lord Stanfield; nor, indeed, to any other man."

A second sigh from the bosom of this importunate young man made me almost out of patience. I looked at my watch, and said, I am engaged, Sir, to call on a lady at one, therefore hope you will excuse me.

He looked surprised, told me he was sorry for having so long detained me at home, made a polite apology, and then——stood as if he either
had

had still more to say, or wished to be detained himself.

I only repeated my desire not to see or hear any more about Lord Stanfield, he was therefore obliged to take his leave.

Certainly his Lordship is happy in the affection of his brother, who is uncommonly affectionate : but—don't you think of returning to England ? Are we never to meet again ?

Just when I was going to dispatch this, Mr. Myron came in ; you have seen the amiable old man—I never behold him without recollecting a number of little circumstances in my life while I was in the marriage state. The first matrimonial month, you may remember, I spent at Oakly-Park : he was like a father to me, and though only the uncle of my husband, and though that husband has

has been dead three years, is still as much esteemed, as much, nay more revered than ever. I was complaining to him of the persecution I hourly meet with from Lord Stanfield; for indeed I cannot stir abroad without being followed by him. My worthy uncle, for so I shall always call him, said, that did he not imagine I should find Oakly-Park very dull; he had half a mind to ask me to come to make him a visit this summer.

Would you believe it, I jumped at this offer. I am just now weary of London, and all its pleasures: I will, therefore, go down with the good old men: I call him old, in opposition to younger man: yet he is but fifty-five, and a fine erect figure, tall, and like all the Myron family, handsome. He has only a niece
of

of his late wife's with him, whom he has promised to take care of since the death of her father, a miss Greaves. I have never seen her: I am not fond of your misses, in general; but I am a violent lover of the country, you know, at this season of the year, and Mr. Myron's library, with my musick, my drawing, and now and then an airing, will amuse me: to say nothing of *his* conversation, which ought to have been first mentioned, as it is at once sprightly, solid, and entertaining.

LET-

L E T T E R III.

From the SAME to the SAME.

YOUR letter was short, and very little to the purpose—if I dare say so without making you angry.—But have you not heard, my dear, from either of your young fellows? for indeed they deserve no higher appellations, and therefore I will leave them, if you please, and proceed to give you a description of such a couple of ——— what shall I call them?—Don't think, however, that they are married: never were two such angels joined together——no, no—married pairs rarely live in such harmony. They are brother and sister, neighbours to Mr. Myron.

Bellville,

Belville, the agreeable, amiable Bellville, is possessed of a moderate estate, which descended to him from his father: but he has made such improvements upon it that he has already doubled the original value of it. —Why do I bestow a line upon his estate, when he himself is an object so deserving of my attention?—His gardens, however, are elegant beyond expression—But to himself—The delicate softness of an Adonis, and the masculine beauty of an Apollo, are happily united in his person, to render it at the same time commanding and attractive. Symmetry and grace have combined to finish the completest figure you ever beheld: his teeth are exquisite, and his hair the finest to be imagined; but his eyes—his eyes, my dear, are out of the reach of description. With these external

ternal charms, he has a cultivated understanding, a correct taste, and the best heart in the world : he has a modesty which is absolutely astonishing in a man who has made the tour of Europe ; and he is as well-bred as if he had lived in a court from his earliest infancy. These are the outlines of this accomplished fellow. His sister, the sweet, the innocent Lucy, the child of nature and simplicity—no—there never was such an angel. In her person, she is the exact picture of her brother, only so enchantingly feminine, so amiably tender—What excessive sensibility ! No, my dear Burton, I never was handsome : you, and Stanfield, and Moyle, and twenty more, do not know what beauty is, if you have not seen Lucy Bellville. She has hitherto lived a very retired life : an old
aunt

aunt had the care of her while her brother was abroad ; but when she comes to be seen and known, the men will all be distracted about her. Yet her personal beauties are her faintest charms. *Goodness* is strongly painted in her countenance, so strongly, that the most abandoned libertine would, I believe, be awed in her presence.

I am so in love with this sweet girl, for she is but sixteen, that I shall endeavour to prevail on her brother to let me take her to London with me. He is so very careful of her, that possibly he may be afraid of even trusting her with me.—I think, however, that I am not indiscreet, though sometimes a little giddy ;—but it is not right to behave to young people with too much severity.—I am quite a matron to Lucy ; and I feel a kind
- of

of growing affection for her, which will not let me exercise any sort of superiority over her.

By the way, I don't think that I am a favourite of Bellville's.—He is very polite—nothing more: he is, indeed, the first man who ever discovered a total indifference to me—but no wonder!—Having been used to see such a lovely figure as his sister constantly before his eyes, all other women must appear of no consequence to him.—The dear Lucy, however, loves me; or at least would make me believe she does—Deceit surely cannot lurk under so innocent a countenance.

She brings her work and sits with me: sometimes she walks with me, and sometimes tries to play upon my *mandoline*. She has already copied some of my drawings extremely well; though

though upon my expressing a little astonishment at the freedom of her pencil (as she had not, before I came down, received much instruction) she freely owned that her brother had assisted her, and had desired her to ask me to lend her a few drawings to copy: accordingly I gave him one of my best landscapes, telling him that I did not doubt but he could very much improve it. He seemed extremely pleased with this proof of my complaisance; and possibly I may, in time, gain his friendship.—That is the most I can hope for, as it is all I have to return.—But he is here.

LET-

LETTER IV.

(From the SAME to the SAME.

I DID not intend to write again to you till you had answered my last; but I find a pleasure I cannot describe in talking to you about this Belville, —(Lucy I mean)—In return for the trifling drawing I gave him, he brought me a nosegay made by a nun at Rome, who presented it to him.——Poor girl! she gave her heart, I fear, at the same time: how I pity her!—You never saw any thing so natural, or so elegant.—Every thing which he has collected abroad does honour to his taste.—His paintings are capital ones, and his drawings are executed in a masterly manner.

I was,

I was, I confess, pleased with his flowers.—But I have been told that he is extremely generous.—He is a prodigious favourite with my uncle, and Bell Greaves seems to have a great *penchant* for him : it will however come to nothing, I believe.—She is not striking either in her person or her manners—not to me at least ; though, to be sure, these very handsome fellows often prefer a plain woman, as there can be no competition between them.—I will not believe that Bellville is capable of such meanness.—No man *appears* less vain.

In Continuation.

The day is over, and I am horribly out of spirits. We have had a great deal of company, among whom
were

were a gentleman and lady who live about eight miles off : they are reckoned very agreeable people, and have a daughter with whom Bellville seems to be too well acquainted. But who do you think they brought with them?—Possibly you already know, having been concerned in the scheme, —I was vastly surprized to see Mr. Moyle step out of the coach with Mr. and Mrs. Ogden ; he accosted me respectfully, but in a manner that discovered a disagreeable intimacy : he absolutely teased me so that I could not possibly watch Bellville and miss Ogden, whom I suspect to be lovers. Yet my uncle and Bell Greaves declare, that nothing yet in turtle way has passed between them. —I don't care to ask Lucy.—What is it to me whom he loves.

L E T.

L E T T E R V.

From the SAME to the SAME.

WELL then, I will confess, since you have discovered what I had not art to conceal, (I really cannot tell whether I wished to conceal it) that I certainly would not have Bellville quite indifferent to me. —I will tell you all.

Piqued, I believe, (nay, I may as well own it) to see him so attached to Mrs. Ogden, I took a hint from *his* behaviour for the regulation of *my own*, and gave as much encouragement as I decently could to Moyle, when we returned the Ogden visit. Bellville looked, I thought, rather dissatisfied at it. He was uncommonly serious, absent, and pen-

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five,

five, falling into frequent *reveries*, which gave him a discontented appearance. On a sudden he went to Miss Ogden, sat by her, took her by the hand, chatted, and seemed so assiduous, so lover-like, that I was hurt by his behaviour: yet, as it could be nothing to me, I strove not to see what was, however, too plain not to be perceived. But the heat of the room, and the croud of people oppressed me so much, that I sunk back in my chair without motion.

How, my dear Burton, shall I describe Bellville's eager solicitude about me! He started up from Miss Ogden, flew to me, and, by numberless assiduities, endeavoured to restore me to myself.

The first object I beheld was *him*, hanging over me with an expression of pity in his countenance which touched

ed me to the heart. Having, I own, a strong inclination to see how far his compassion would carry him, I was in no hurry to recover; but still continued in the languishing attitude into which I had fallen, though I declared I was better, to give him both time and opportunity to pay me a thousand little attentions.

Miss Greaves, who was, I believe, very much disgusted by Bellville's behaviour, came up to me, and endeavoured to drive him away, telling him that by crouding about he prevented me from receiving any benefit from the air of a large window which Mr. Myron had thrown open.

He drew back with a respectful motion, though his eyes were earnestly fixed on my face with a tender concern, which gave me inexpressible satisfaction.

The company proposing a walk in the garden, I rose ; Bellville still kept near me, and, more than once, offered his arm to support me. I declined accepting of it: but refused it in such a manner as to give him no reason to imagine that I had any dislike to his assistance. He cannot be disliked---I am only afraid of liking him too well: yet neither on account of his birth or his fortune do I think him too inconsiderable to pretend to an alliance with me—Supposing his situation in life less genteel than it is, the charms of his person and the accomplishments of his mind would make ample amends for the deficiencies in point of riches and extraction—But to what purpose should I wish to be loved by him? I will not, cannot, bring myself to marry.—No, I shall be contented with his esteem,

esteem, and his friendship; thinking myself more flattered by the approbation of such a man, than by the fulsome compliments of all the coxcombs in town. Actuated by this laudable ambition, I shall be clear from the imputation of coquetry, as I take no pains to be admired or to be loved.—I shall be quite satisfied with Bellville's regard.

Lucy, his lovely sister, has been with me: she came before I was up, to know how I did, and, after a multitude of excuses, told me that the earliness of her visit was entirely occasioned by her brother's impatience to hear about my health, adding, that she had promised to go back to him directly.

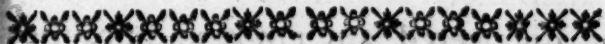
I stopped her just as she was upon the wing, and sent a servant to desire

Mr. Bellville's company, to meet his sister at breakfast.

He came immediately, and appeared pleased with the invitation. We all chatted together in the garden upon a variety of subjects, for three hours—What sense! what taste! How very insignificant are our meer young fellows compared to him! Certainly, Burton, if a woman should be tempted to fall in love with such a man, her *tendresse* might be forgiven. But he is, I believe, perfectly indifferent to the whole sex—Now *that* indifference will suit me extremely.

I fancied that he was particular to Miss Ogden; I fancied that he (how silly I was) felt himself affected when he saw me so indisposed—Common politeness, nothing more, hurried him to my assistance. There
are

are few such men, I believe, who are not *Narcissuses*. I speak by experience—yet I must confess that Bellville did not appear to me to be that kind of man. But I will say no more concerning him. If I do, you will imagine that I can write on no other subject.



L E T T E R VI.

From the SAME to the SAME.

AS I am a woman, my dear Louisa, I am consequently unable to keep my resolution. I must talk of Bellville, or be totally silent. He has been frequently here, and I have as frequently returned Lucy's visits; and, as often as I could, without Bell Greaves. He is always

good

good humoured and obliging, but entirely different from all other men: he never has addressed one civil thing to my *person*: he never gives me any preference but when he thinks that my rank demands it—How I despise such a preference! how unsatisfactory is it, compared with *that* to which merit is entitled! Neither has he discovered any emotion since he appeared, according to my observation, agitated on my flirting with Moyle; I have therefore nothing to apprehend from him as a lover: there is no fear of my being teased with his *belle passion*.

I asked Lucy, the other day what I must do to prevail on him to let her go to town with me: she looked up innocently in my face, and told me that there was nothing else, she was sure, he could refuse me.

I took

I took an opportunity to let him know how much I wished for his leave to have his sister's company. He answered that it gave him a great deal of pain to deny any request with which I honoured him, but added with a smile, " The appearance of such a young girl, bred up in retirement, and little acquainted with the customs of the world, with your ladyship, may be attended with the most disagreeable consequences. Happily, her ignorance has kept her hitherto out of danger. Into what scenes of dissipation must she be thrown in your ladyship's sphere of life, and how fatal may those scenes be to her, as she has not your ladyship's understanding, experience, and discretion!"

Without this well-timed compliment (though it hardly deserves the name of one, as it could not hand-

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somerly

somely be avoided) I should have been not a little offended ; I could not help asking him, however, if he thought that I should have been happier if I had never seen London ?

Hereplied, "That people of different dispositions required different amusements ; but that he believed those who had a relish for a private and retired life felt less anxiety, and consequently more peace of mind, when they did not find themselves lost in the whirl of pleasure : that they were, at least, more free from that languor and restlessness which constantly attended the votaries of gaiety, who are never happy out of a crowd."

" Well but," said I, eagerly, " let me only have Miss Bellville with me, I promise you that I will keep little company, and regular hours,
and

and introduce her to places and people just sufficient to change the scene agreeably, and to make a pleasing diversity in her amusements."

"I am not afraid to trust her with your Ladyship," replied he, "but with herself."

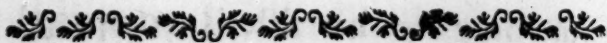
"Come then to town," said I, (blushing to almost court a man thus only for his sister's company) "to see her often, and superintend a conduct which will, I dare say, rather merit your approbation, than deserve your reproofs."

He shook his head. I told him that I looked upon his silence as an assent, and should, therefore, prepare his sister to bid adieu to the country in another week.

Lucy seems delighted with my having gained this point: she is fond of her brother, but novelty is

so bewitching to young minds, that few can withstand its charms.

I really mean to deal justly with Bellville, and to take the greatest care of a girl who is too lovely to be neglected, and for whom I have conceived a sincere esteem.



LETTER VII.

From MR. BELLVILLE to MR.
MANWAYRING.

I HAVE lived from day to day in expectation of seeing you here, till I am wearied with my repeated disappointments. I cannot wait for you any longer : I *must* write, at length, what I should have chosen to have delivered in another

ther way upon a subject which has so engrossed my thoughts, that there will, I think, be a necessity for my coming to some determination soon, or else they will steal me from myself.

You, my friend, have, ever since my father's death, been the guide of my youth, and even when you believed me sufficiently fortified by your salutary precepts to be trusted by my own direction, you kindly promised to give me your best advice in any embarrassing situation. I am, at this time, my dear Manwayring, in such a situation, and want your advice and assistance more than ever. But you ought certainly to be with me at present, in order to be capable of giving your admonitions with the greater propriety.

You

You know, my friend, with what circumspection I have ever avoided those women, who, though possessed of the most engaging qualities, and highly favoured by nature in their persons, were by no means formed to make *me* happy, according to the plan of domestic life, which is, in my opinion, the only life productive of true and permanent felicity. I have lately fallen in the way of a lady, whom, as she is abundantly more beautiful and more accomplished than any woman I ever met with, I cannot possibly entirely avoid: not that she made an impression upon me at first too deep to be effaced by time and absence—(according to all human probability) especially as I looked upon her in a light far above my hopes, and from her rank, fortune, and beauty, very
 unfit

unfit for a man who prefers tranquility and retirement to all the parade of the gay *world*, and all its most alluring pleasures.

With these unfashionable sentiments I first met Lady Camilla Myron at my good neighbour's, the uncle of her late husband, who was the eldest son of Lord Conquer; but dying about a year before his father, the title descended to a younger brother.

Lady Camilla is, perhaps, one of the finest women existing: her figure is commanding, and she is delicately formed: her complexion is brilliant, and her eyes—the most seducing ones to be imagined: she has an extreme pretty mouth, her teeth are exceedingly even and white, and her light shining hair grows thick about her fair face.—But this
lovely

lovely woman, though I have not done justice to her personal charms by describing them, is still more bewitching by her manners, her disposition, and her conversation. With such a woman, my dear friend, you will allow that I have been in no small danger. It has been my whole employment, indeed, to regulate my behaviour in such a manner as not to give even the most indifferent observer room to suppose that I am in the least affected by such striking beauties: my greatest difficulty was to keep my heart *untouched* by her amiable attractions—I could only arm myself against the power of them, by considering that I could not expect to enjoy any felicity with a woman so universally admired and followed, admitting she liked me well enough

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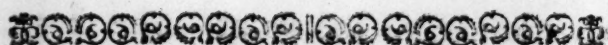
to give me an opportunity to avow the passion which she had kindled in my breast; an opportunity which I dared not, for the sake of my tranquillity, wish for—But now I am coming to the point—She has, by her looks, and by every part of her behaviour, given me all the reason in the world to think that I am not at all neglected by her, or beheld with indifference.

Will you not, after the perusal of this last paragraph, set me down for the most ridiculous of all coxcombs? —Don't be in a hurry, however: come and see me with lady Camilla before you pronounce the sentence against me, which I should be sorry to deserve.

I am at this moment summoned by her ladyship to go with her, Miss Greaves, and my sister, to the
next

next village. When I return, you shall hear farther from your

CHARLES BELLVILLE.



LETTER VIII.

From the SAME to the SAME.

WE walked to *Frampton*.—
 Yes—Lady Camilla walked
 —women of quality can dance, and
 can romp, I know; but *walking*
 never was supposed by me to be one
 of their accomplishments. *Frampton*
 is at least five miles from Myron's,
 yet this delicate angel—I could almost
 say, robust woman—set out with
 an alacrity and spirit which surprized
 me, and gave no signs of weariness
 till

till she was within a mile of home on her return: she then began to grow very much fatigued. We were behind the rest of our company, for she had detained me in order to point out some fine views. She draws in an amazing style; but her observations upon the face of the country, and the manner in which they were delivered, gave me infinitely more pleasure than I ever received from the happiest productions of her pencil.

Having exhausted both her strength and spirits, she turned pale, and the most inviting languor succeeded the charming sprightliness with which she entered upon her walk.

I offered my arm for her support. — I had once done so before, when she was indisposed. It was *then* refused, but there was something so enchanting in her refusal, that the acceptance
of

of my offer would hardly have given me more pleasure.

She was *now* in another situation. There was no person in sight ; she therefore leaned on my arm, and with such satisfaction, strongly expressed by every look and motion, that I could not help being touched, my friend. Who, what man, not divested of sensibility, could support so fine a creature, and not be affected by having her so immediately under his protection !—I trembled with delight ; yet I strove to suppress *my* feelings, while she kindly seemed to give a modest loose to *hers*. Her beauteous eyes met mine with a languid sweetness in them which I never observed before ; and her melodious voice was unusually softened when she spoke.

How dangerous are such interviews as those ! She not only, however,

ever, appears pleased with them, but seeks them, contrives them, and enjoys them with an avidity scarce to be credited. She is also extremely fond of Lucy, and will not hear of my opposing her request to take her to town. When such an angel condescends to ask a favour ! O Manwayring, if I had denied her, I should have been—not a man surely —yet I don't approve of Lucy's leaving me, to run into high life with such a captivating companion.

When you read this you will possibly say, that because a fine woman is tolerably civil to me now and then, I am vain enough to encourage the most idle and romantic fancies. Were her civilities only conferred on me now and then, I might justly be set down for an egregious coxcomb for
reck-

reckoning upon them ; but she is always particular to me.

“That is, because there is no other man ready.”

But again : she has a professed admirer here, a handsome insinuating young fellow, and yet I have indisputably the preference.

“ Probably she is a coquette.”

I never saw her in the least inclined to flirt with any man. No, her whole conduct is uniform and consistent : she singles me out from all the rest of the company, not only to-day, to-morrow, and next day, but every day ; every day, my friend : read these words over again.

Mr. Myron had his house full the other night : all the men adored Lady Camilla : they sung, played, danced, romped—but *she* would not romp with any body. She gave her hand

to me to lead up the ball. They all asked her to sing; she refused. At last I took it into my head to beg the favour of a song; she immediately complied.

Some of the most assured among the men began to attempt little freedoms, which, though impertinent enough, could not properly be very severely resented.—Lady Camilla affected not to be angry with those which were offered to *her*; but eagerly breaking from Mr. Moyle, who strove to detain her hand, flew to me, and almost throwing herself into my arms, cried, half out of breath, “O Mr. Bellville, save me from these rude creatures!”

I pressed her to my bosom; and, while I enclosed all that is lovely in woman, swore to protect her.

She

She smiled with ineffable sweetness, and told me she was happy under *my* care. I cannot describe my feelings at that instant—I can only say that I was in Elysium—in Paradise—I hardly knew, in short, where I was.

What am I to think of this behaviour, my Manwayring? do I dream? have I been only penning the visions of a heated imagination in the language of a lunatic? Or, may I seriously venture to believe that such a lovely woman, lovely in the highest degree, will ever be sufficiently prejudiced in my favour, to listen to me upon a subject on which I long to speak, though I tremble at the thoughts of speaking it?—What do I not feel!—O what a conflict is there between my heart and my lips!

LET-

L E T T E R IX.

From the SAME to the SAME.

YOU told me I might venture--
 I have ventured, and am undone ; but yet I know not what to say--there never was surely such a bewitching creature. We grew more and more intimate every hour. She gave me every modest encouragement a woman could give. Presuming upon *that* and your advice, (let me say rather your positive injunctions) I threw myself and all I was master of, at her feet, declaring, at the same time, that being thoroughly conscious of my demerits, I trusted entirely to her goodness to pardon a liberty of which my admiration of her various charms had made me guilty.

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“ I very readily pardon you, Mr. Bellville,” said she, with the most engaging smile, “ if you really believe that you have done any thing to require my forgiveness; and, in return, shall only desire the continuance of your esteem.”

“ My esteem, Madam !” I exclaimed, all astonished.

“ Aye,” replied she, “ you look surprized; but I have, on some occasions, a very particular way of thinking: I see no reason why two people, though they do not chuse to enter into indissoluble engagements, must avoid each other as if they were on the most disagreeable terms, and never converse as freely as they do with their common acquaintance. Far from being offended with the man who thinks well enough of me to wish to end his days with me, I
am

am obliged to him; and provided he does not revive a subject on which I have already delivered my sentiments, I am at a loss to know why we may not chat together in the same easy manner we did before."

Still more surprized at her free avowal of sentiments so new to me, I began to flatter myself that possibly she imagined she had been too hasty in pronouncing my sentence, and already repented of her severe behaviour: I therefore, with all the timidity attendant on a real passion, begged to know, that since she honoured me so highly as to appear to wish for what she might ever command, my sincerest esteem, why she still cruelly forbade me to hope for any thing more from her?

"I'll tell you honestly and truly," said she, with a beautiful glow on

her cheeks, which rendered her almost a divinity ; “had I not determined not to enter into a second marriage, I don’t know a man in the world, to whom I would with more pleasure give my hand than to Mr. Belville : but I have such strong, such unanswerable reasons, against a connexion of that nature, or indeed against any other, being firmly resolved to admit the addresses of no mortal whatever, that unless you will be satisfied with only looking upon me as a friend, I shall be obliged to break off an acquaintance which has, I frankly confess, given me the greatest satisfaction.”

“ A friend, my lady !” cried I, quite amazed and disappointed, yet charmed with this unaccountably alluring woman.

“ Yes, Mr. Bellville,” replied she, “ I require *your* friendship, and promise

mise you *mine* in return: that is, supposing yours to be pure, sincere, and unmixed with any passion of a tenderer kind; for the resolution I have mentioned I fully intend to keep."

"What a strange carriage!" However, I bowed and subscribed to the restrictions she insisted on. Who would refuse such a lovely creature's friendship? who would not heartily promise his own in return? yet there is something so extraordinary, so wild, in this way of proceeding.— Surely she is not an absolute Platonist; if she is, I shall not think so highly of her as I *have* done. Such romantic flights are above *my* comprehension: by endeavouring to soar above human frailty, are we not sometimes most deplorably mortified!

This conversation has disturbed me excessively: I love Lady Camilla better than I ever loved any woman; yet I love her as a man, and as a rational being; consequently I wish to find her not a goddess, but a woman. As she is adorned with all the charms which can make a female irresistible, let her not be exempted from the amiable weaknesses of her sex, which necessarily render them desirous of flying to us as their protectors—I want not the woman whom I wish to make my wife believe herself endowed with intellectual strength sufficient to justify her running into the way of temptation, on purpose to rise superior to it. But, perhaps, I am too hasty: perhaps her refusal so disconcerted me that I did not rightly understand her.—I am certainly very unhappy, and stand in need of all my

my reason to support me under my infelicity.

Lucy, to whom I have complained about her Ladyship, tells me, that she will be as unhappy as I am if she does not see me as chearful as usual.--I would not have her teach my sister her Platonics; for, to a girl young and innocent as Lucy is, I look upon Platonism to be very damnable doctrine.

LETTER X.

Lady CAMILLA MYRON to Mrs.
BURTON.

BELLVILLE loves me, and I am happy--yet I shall not long be so, if I am not to see him and hear him as usual. No man ever

D 4 addressed

addressed a woman with more respect and tenderness: I refused him notwithstanding, positively refused him—But though I would not accept of his love, I begged his *friendship*. —At the mention of *that* word he looked quite astonished—However, as I told you before, I will not marry. You may call my entire disapprobation of a second marriage a foolish delicacy perhaps: call it what you will, I am my own mistress, and may act as I think proper. I will admit no lovers, but I cannot have too many friends; and for what reason upon earth, can any body tell me, should I give up the conversation of one of the most amiable men who ever existed only because I do not chuse to marry? I am quite sick of love and lovers: but I esteem and value all
men

men who are capable of making unchangeable friends.

I have seen Bellville but once since the interesting conversation above-mentioned. He was polite and obliging, yet uncommonly serious, and seemed rather willing to avoid me.—Possibly he may be governed by other motives—That mad wretch, Lord Conquer, is come down to see Mr. Myron. Meeting Lucy Bellville, he was in such raptures at her beauty, and the sweet simplicity of her behaviour, that I am pretty sure he appeared, in her brother's eyes too dangerous a man to fall into so innocent a young creature's way. Bellville, therefore, was not very ready to make an acquaintance with him; but George, who never wants what he calls an easy assurance, invited himself to the *Wood*, that is the

name of Bellville's place. Lucy, if I am not exceedingly mistaken, thinks my wild brother a wonderful pretty fellow. Poor child ! little is she acquainted with the ways of men—little does she consider how absolutely necessary it is to guard her heart against them--If I could find her a man as good as her brother I would give her leave to love him immediately.

In Continuation

My sweet little novice already feels her own consequence, and keeps George at some distance, though the rogue will toy and romp with her more than he ought to do ; but in such a manner that the most scrupulous cannot well be offended at his freedoms. He is, however, so artful

ful a devil that one ever is scarce
secure.

Bellville stays from the Park. I asked my uncle this morning, with all the *naïveté* in the world, if his neighbour was ill, as he never came near us.

“As if you did not know every thought in his bosom, replied he-- But believe me, Lady Camilla, you will never find a man more deserving of you.”---

“I don’t think I *shall*, uncle, said I, therefore I will not marry at all; women who are in a hurry to take *second* husbands, proclaim their disregard to the memory of their first.”

“I am of a contrary opinion now, said Mr. Myron; a woman who has had an agreeable husband, is, I think, less able to live alone, and the more excusable in looking out for another.

People who have been once happy in the marriage-state, are seldom happy out of it."

Lucy came in soon afterwards as blooming as May, followed by lord Conquer, who patted her neck behind, untied her necklace, and played a thousand foolish tricks with her. She blushed, she smiled, she even sighed when he left us to go with Mr. Myron into the garden. By the way, George is very handsome. A glance which Lucy shot after him sufficiently informed me of the true situation of her heart.

"And so you love this wild fellow?" said I to her.

She looked like a blushing rose, and hung her head. After a silence of about five minutes she recovered, came to me, and throwing her arms round my neck, cried, "My dear,
dear

dear lady Camilla, how strangely you think of your Lucy!"

"No longer *my* Lucy," replied I, "but lord Conquer's Lucy."

"Indeed," said the charming girl, still more confused, "Lord Conquer is nothing to *me*--besides, my brother—

"O ay, child," replied I briskly, "where is this brother of yours? He never comes hither: he does not behave agreeably to my expectations: tell him if he will not come to see me I will come to see *him*."

In short, Bellville's obstinacy vexes me. As he cannot have me upon his own terms, he will not have me at all——But men were ever perverse creatures.—How lucky I am in not being married to him.

LE T.

L E T T E R X I.

From the SAME to the SAME.

WE are all here in the utmost confusion and distress. Lucy Bellville and lord Conquer are both missing, and we all fear that they are somewhere together. The simple girl has indeed been most probably decoyed by his lordship. During her brother's absence from home, a servant came with a coach, and told her that Mr. Bellville had been thrown from his horse near a gentleman's house almost five miles off, who had, at his request, sent his carriage to fetch her to him. The unsuspecting creature hurried away, with tears in her eyes, and has not been heard of since.

Bell-

Bellville is half distracted. This event, added to *my* refusal (for I am sure he loves me) is too much.

Mr. Myron and I went to visit him yesterday ; he was pale, wretched, and disordered all over. You cannot imagine how I felt for him ; and my concern was doubled by thinking that any person with whom I was connected should have behaved so infamously as to seduce the sister of the most amiable and worthiest of men. I grieve also for that sweet innocent girl, the very image of her brother ; for though I rallied her about Lord Conquer, she was, I am certain, too good to yield willingly : some diabolical arts have been used to undermine a virtue founded on principle, and strengthened by education. Poor dear girl, could we but learn where she is !—But we have

have no news about her, and Lord Conquer has written a letter to Mr. Myron from Brighthelmstone, at which place, I have heard from people who have seen him there, he actually now is. Bellville grieves for her as much as if she was a favourite mistress : few men love a sister so well ; but there is a tenderness in his nature peculiar to himself.

I sat by him two hours, and strove to amuse him to very little purpose, though he was still polite to me : he declared that he should never know ease again till he had recovered his dear lost Lucy, and shewn his resentment to her seducer.

I tremble to think of the consequences with which this affair may be attended. I set before him, in the strongest colours, the madness of exposing a life a thousand times more valuable

valuable than his enemy's, and for which I told him, he was answerable to him from whom he received his existence.

He acknowledged the truth of what I said; but added, that though no body abhorred duelling more than himself, honour and justice both loudly called him to defend a poor helpless orphan-sister, left to his care by the tenderest of mothers on her death-bed, by the utmost exertion of his courage to seize her from the hands of her seducer, and punish him for his infamous behaviour.

Mr. Myron also strove, by every argument he could think of, to calm his mind; but we were obliged to leave him in a very agitated state; and I confess, for my own part, that I am not much better. What trouble and uneasiness do men occasion in the world.

world. I begin absolutely to hate the sex—yet I *must* feel for Bellville.



L E T T E R X I I .

From the SAME to the SAME.

I HAVE been so much alarmed by this strange affair, that it has actually disordered me ; and Belville, on his return from London, (whither he went *post*, to make all possible enquiries after his sister) calling at Mr. Myron's, found me so ill, that, though I was below stairs, I could hardly lift up my head from the back of my chair.

He expressed great concern and anxiety on my account. Engrossed as
his

his thoughts were by Lucy, of whom he has not yet heard any thing, his behaviour was even tender, and I had not, I confess, power to chide him at a time when I knew he was so very unhappy. I took a pleasure in his little assiduities about me. I cannot well say at present what I would have more than to see him made easy by the return of this poor lost girl.

Moyle has been also here; he tells me that Lord Stanfield is the intimate friend of Lord Conquer, and that he is certain if Miss Bellville is with *him*, his brother will soon hear of her. How scandalously do these men debase the sacred name of friend, by thus associating merely for the destruction of our helpless sex!

L E T-

L E T T E R XIII.

Lord CONQUER to the Earl of
STANFIELD.

Brighthelmstone.

I Have secured the lovely prize which I mentioned to you when we met last : such a jewel, Harry, you never yet had in your possession. I made use of rather a stale trick though to decoy her : however, as she is simplicity itself, it succeeded. I was, indeed, a little apprehensive lest *your* flame, my fine sister, Lady Camilla, might have told her what wicked wretches lively fellows are, and taught her a little of *her* saving knowledge. Camilla, you know, hates what she calls a man of pleasure--But to my sweet *innocent*.

When

When I first jumped into the coach to her, as soon as it was far enough upon the road to prevent suspicion, she seemed exceedingly alarmed, and begged and prayed me, with her pretty eyes almost drowned in tears, to let her go back to her brother. But after the first flow of resentment was over (women, Harry, have a great advantage over us by their tears, for weeping is a glorious vent to their passions) she grew much less discomposed, and appeared not to oppose my amorous sollicitude about her, while I kept *my* feelings within proper bounds; but I must take care of my movements, I find she is ignorant yet, I think, innately chaste— If I can once gain her heart, and I am encouraged to hope for a triumph over it, a sham divine finishes my business in a few minutes. I must
not,

not, however, hurry things, neither : I would chuse to have her yield willingly, and not lay me under a necessity of proceeding to violent measures. And yet if that sober fellow, her brother, should find us out before I am master of her person, I shall be tempted to run him through the body—He may have her as soon as he pleases afterwards. Upon my soul she is a d--d fine creature, sweet tempered, and gentle as she is beautiful. But to prevent interruption, and to throw him on a false scent, I appear in public here some part of every day, while my prey is secured in an obscure cottage a few miles off, which I make my home, and in which I avail myself of every enticing art to win her very soul, and sing *Te Deum* over her stubborn virtue. You may see her if you think you can trust
your

your heart in her company; but I would not even let *you* have one peep at her if you were not my dearest friend, and if I did not believe that the little dissembling hussy loves me, though she will not own her sensations in my favour—But as I have taught her the first deceit she ever practised, I believe, in her life, I can forgive her on condition that *I alone* reap the advantage of it; and that she, at last, freely confesses the passion which she at present, pretty blushing fool, is ashamed to encourage.

LET-

L E T T E R X I V .

Lady CAMILLA MYRON to Mrs.
BURTON.

I am now going to give you a pleasure, my dear Burton, that you little expect from me : I am going to write an encomium upon Lord Stanfield : he has indeed obliged us greatly; for he has brought home the dear but undone Lucy to her distressed brother, and restored my young friend to me. There are some circumstances attending this affair truly shocking, for Lord Stanfield arrived not time enough to prevent a marriage, which cannot be valid. I really don't know what to make of it. As Lucy tells her story, Lord Conquer absolutely terrified her into
a consent

a consent, on vowing to take by force every liberty without marriage ; but certainly no woman in her senses would consent to marry a man in such a way on such terms. However, I will relate the facts as I have heard them from Lord Stanfield (confirmed by herself) and you shall make your own comment upon them.

His Lordship delivered his narrative to me in the following terms :

“ On receiving a letter from Lord Conquer relating to the carrying off Miss Bellville, I immediately set out for Brighthelmstone, with a resolution to deliver her, if possible, as my brother told me that you had interested yourself in her safety; but, upon my arrival, I could not meet with his Lordship, and as he had not trusted me with the name of the

place where he had concealed his captive (for she certainly was one) I was obliged to wait there till he returned ; and return he did not till some days after the marriage-ceremony had been read to them by one of his creatures. On our meeting, Lord Conquer carried me directly to the house in which he had lodged this poor deluded girl, and introduced me to her as his bride : I declare I was quite struck with the down-cast modesty of her appearance, which rendered her person still more beautiful ; yet certain I was of her having been cruelly drawn into a situation in which she could never taste any happiness. I felt myself extremely loth to make her acquainted with the advantage which had been taken of her credulity, as she really believed herself to be legally married ; and, though

though she afterwards confessed that she was forced to give her consent, I was once almost inclined to leave her as she was, having first endeavoured to persuade my Lord to make her his wife publicly, as he would, in all probability, one day marry; and to induce him to think that no woman on earth could be more suitable to him. With these views I returned with Lord Conquer to Brighthelmstone, and attacked him with every argument which I judged likely to effect my purpose; but being treated only with an insulting sneer for my trouble, I seized the first opportunity, when I knew his Lordship was engaged with a party, to go back to the village: there, in the gentlest terms I could devise, I informed poor Lucy of her situation. The unwelcome news shocked her

so much, that she fell motionless at my feet ; and it was some time before I could bring her to her senses. As soon as she recovered, she burst out into pathetic lamentations, which would have moved the most obdurate heart. I soon, however, put a stop to the violence of them, by telling her that she had not a moment to lose; and that I would carry her, with all expedition, to the *Wood*, if she wished to return to her brother.

“ Her reply was, with her hands lifted up to heaven, “ O my God ! whom shall I trust ? I have already been deceived by *one* man,” continued she, fixing her eyes on me, “ and who are you, who can assure me that you have not as bad a design as *he* had who has already imposed upon me ? Whither, whither can such a poor distressed creature as I now am, fly for security ?” “ You

"You may depend upon security with me, Madam," said I; "and may believe me when I tell you that I will not quit your side till I have seen you safe in your brother's house."

"Re-assured a little by this speech, she cried, in a pious attitude,

"Almighty protector of the innocent, be my guide—But go where I will, I must be miserable."

"A flood of tears followed that ejaculation. After having endeavoured to soothe her with the most comforting expressions in my power, I hurried her into my post-chaise, and brought her safe to the *Wood*, where Bellville received me with open arms."

Here ends his Lordship's narrative. He has certainly acted a laudable part, though he had no occasion to make a merit of the action to me when he came to wait on me to

Lucy. He has behaved handsomely, I will allow ; but I don't like him the better for being so closely connected with Lord Conquer and his vices. The avowed friend of such a man cannot be a *much less amiable* character.

You will magnify this incident now, I know, into a piece of prodigious heroism ; but I must judge for myself. I complimented Lord Stanfield, however, on his being so serviceable to my friend ; but could not help, at the same time, advising him to break off acquaintance with people who could only dishonour him.

His reply to this speech was pretty enough :

“ If your Ladyship will recollect, that without having been intimate with Lord Conquer I should not have come to the knowledge of Miss Bellville's

Bellville's situation, nor have been able to assist her in her escape, you will, I flatter myself, be more considerate."

These men, Burton, have always their apologies ready.

Bellville, though glad to have his sister again, will ever lament her not being as pure as she left him; and not all my uncle's rhetoric, nor *my* eloquence, will, I imagine, be sufficient to hinder him from challenging Lord Conquer. On every other occasion how mild, how gentle, how patient how forgiving is this man! But, what man of sp'rit can bear an insult of this kind unmoved? I, myself, I am afraid, should be apt to depise him if he tamely submitted to it—and yet—to think of his being in danger—I die with terror—

Oh! my Louisa, I am the weakest

of women—Poor Lucy! she gives but a very imperfect account of what has past. Her intellects are, I doubt, disturbed: she certainly had a kind of partiality towards this devil who has undone her, and will never, I fear, find peace in this world. Yet how exquisitely beautiful is she! rendered infinitely more so by her blushes and her tears—

Lord Stanfield has, I have told you, endeavoured to make a merit of his heroic action to me—but, if I have any eyes, he would, I dare say, willingly supply the place of his vile—O such friends! He has not seen her, however, since he brought her home—She will not be seen by any body, except her brother and me—Dear, unfortunate girl, how I pity her!—Glad am I now that I did not take her to town—I should have been distracted

tracted to have had such an affair happen while she was under *my* care.

Bellville has an amiable man with him, between forty and fifty, who deserves indeed the appellation of friend: he and Mr. Myron are continually setting before him both the guilt and the folly of duelling, and asking him if the killing Lord Conquer, or being killed by him, will restore his sister's honour or her peace.

Mr. Myron will write to Lord Conquer: but what impression will the most sensible, the most affecting remonstrances make upon so hardened a wretch !

P. S. I had almost forgot to tell you that Lord Stanfield has again revived the old story of his passion; and that I have again given him a definitive answer.

E 5

LET.

LETTER XV.

From the SAME to the SAME.

BELLVILLE, to my great happiness, is preserved from sacrificing himself to the honour of his sister.

Lord Conquer challenged Lord Stanfield for depriving him of Lucy: they met; they fought. Lord Conquer is dangerously wounded. Lord Stanfield is arrived safe at Calais. Mr. Myron, having been desired by the former to see him before he dies, is gone to London.

As for myself, for Bell Greaves is nobody, I sit the greatest part of every day by Lucy, from whom we have concealed this news, endeavouring to make her more satisfied with herself; but

but I have not yet met with any success. She weeps till she is almost blind; and when wearied with grief, and quite worn down by sorrow, throws her arms round my neck, lays her head on my bosom, and gives herself up to despair; while Bellville sits on the other side, holding my hand in his, and saying every thing he can think of to rouse us both from our stupidity, which alarms him. He makes hourly acknowledgments to me for condescending to shew so much solicitude about his sister; but at the same time begs me to have *some* compassion for *him*, and no longer to refuse him the blessing he so earnestly implores. “I do not now, Lady Camilla, said he, while you are thus overwhelmed with grief and uneasiness, presume to request the favour of your hand; but as I hope,

continued he, with a deep sigh, that these troubles will one day be over, may I not also hope that your pity will extend to *me*, to *me* who suffers from my uncertainty on *your* account as much as I endure on this dear girl's?"

"I have told you, Mr. Bellville, said I, more than once, since the commencement of our acquaintance, that from your intrinsic merit, and the propriety of your behaviour, you were intitled to my esteem and friendship; but no man must expect any thing more from me."

He sighed at my answer. I have often assured him that I am serious in my declarations, but I have no great opinion of his faith in them; for though I have forbid him to speak upon the subject of love, his eyes are talking all day long upon it,
and

and I am only too much afraid that mine betrayed my heart.

How lovely is he, even in the midst of distress ! Whenever he, overcome in a manner with it, sinks down in his chair, covers his fine expressive face with his hand, and is unable to utter a syllable, my heart is almost bursting to relieve him ; I forget all that I have said, run to him, stand looking on him, and finding that he pays no regard to me, cry, “ Speak, Bellville ; I can’t bear this silence : speak, and remove my anxiety.” He then starts up, catches my hand, and presses it ardently to his lips, while I have not power to refuse him so trifling a satisfaction.

I asked Lucy yesterday, as she seemed somewhat more composed, how she could have been prevailed on to give her hand to this wretch, as she
might

might have rationally imagined that her friends would have found her out, and would have delivered her. She declared that she had no notion of such a deceitful proceeding, and was indeed so frightened and confused as hardly to know what passed; adding, that she should on no account have consented to be married had she entertained the least suspicion that the person who performed the ceremony was not a real clergyman. "When Lord Stanfield, concluded told me of the trick which had she, been played upon me, and that my marriage was not a legal one, I was so astonished and shocked, that the horrid news almost deprived me of my senses."

In Continuation.

Here is an express from Mr. Myron with a letter to Mr. Bellville.
With

With *his* leave I have transcribed it for your perusal.

Copy of Mr. MYRON's Letter to
Mr. BELLVILLE.

Dear Sir,

I have found Lord Conquer as bad as possible ! yet he retains his senses. Heaven seems to have spared him in pity to *you*, and dear Miss Bellville, that he may have it in his power to make some, indeed the only, reparation now left him. He speaks not now of any thing but the earnest desire to call her legally his wife ; and to leave his name and fortune *to* her, as he can have no hopes of enjoying his fortune *with* her. He has insisted on my acquainting you and your sister with this last request, with all imaginable expedition ; begging that

the same expedition may be used in bringing Miss Bellville to town, lest her arrival may be too late for him to do her the justice to which she is entitled. *You*, Mr. Bellville, best know how this request of his lordship's will affect your sister : but if *my* advice, as a real friend, can have any weight with you, comply with it. What is past cannot be recalled ; there is no other way for the restoration of the character and peace of the injured young lady, but this ; and *this* will, in time, I make no doubt, prove as efficacious as it is sincerely wished to be, by

Your obedient

Humble Servant,

G. Myron.

As soon as Bellville had read this letter, he sent to desire the favour of speaking

speaking to me, having left me with Lucy when he went down to Mr. Myron's servant.

I met him in the parlour. Putting the letter into my hand, he intreated my opinion of it.

I gave him the following answer.

“ Were Lord Conquer in a fair way to recover, I would be the last person in the world to advise you to consent to such an alliance, because I think that to be united to a man of his lordship's vile principles, is not only to live a disagreeable life, it is to be also in a dangerous situation ; but, as he is so near his end, I entirely subscribe to Mr. Myron's sentiments, with regard to the silencing those calumniating tongues who would be ready to reflect upon Miss Bellville's conduct in reproachful terms : by complying with my brother's request,
you

you will at least give such a turn to the affair as to make people believe things are not really so bad as they were at first represented: besides, there is in fact, no other remedy left; it will certainly therefore be the prudent thing to accept of the invitation immediately, as a moment's delay may put it out of your power. You will find the most difficult task to prepare Lucy for the journey; but I, with your assistance, will endeavour to prepare her."

We then, both of us, returned to Lucy's apartment.

After a short but severe invective against libertines, (I often inveigh bitterly against them) I asked her if she should not be glad to hear that the injury lord Conquer had done her was revenged by lord Stanfield, who had dangerously wounded him in a duel.

She turned pale as death directly, fetched a deep sigh, and fainted away.

I had not, I confess, believed she could have been so much affected by the approaching dissolution of a man whom she had so much reason to abhor.

Proper remedies, however, soon restored her to life: she appeared extremely frightened and shocked, burst into tears, but said nothing.

Her brother then told her of my lord's dying request, and begged her to assume all the fortitude she was mistress of, as it would be necessary to support her at such a trying moment.

"Oh! I cannot go—I cannot see him die," cried she, hiding her face with her hands.

"My dear Lucy," said I, "listen to *me*, for whom you ever professed
a par-

a particular affection; listen to your brother, who is still dearer to you, and be persuaded to accept of this poor wretch's earnest invitation, as he is so desirous of making his peace with heaven and with *you*. Do not, my good girl, prevent him from doing the only just action he has ever found himself capable of, but go to him, and let him see that though so highly injured, you have, nevertheless, magnanimity enough to pardon the gross insult you received from him.— You would not, added I, seeing her hesitate, let him perish, I hope, without your pardon. Culpable he is certainly to a very great degree; but we are commanded to forgive even our enemies, and to return good for evil; and *he* can have no consolation now but from *your* acquiescence with his last desire.”

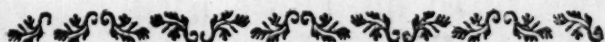
“ I can

"I *can*, I *do* forgive him," replied she, sobbing, "but I cannot see him die—I was almost as much to blame as himself—I ought not to have been so credulous."

On the entrance of a servant to tell his master that the chaise was ready, I bade her maid put on her cloak, and Bellville joining *his* persuasions to *mine*, she went willingly with him. I believe indeed, from all I could observe, that she felt more concern at my brother's being so near death, than at any thing else. She undoubtedly loves him, worthless as he has been. I am transported, however, that he has, in some measure, repented at length of his errors, and looks upon them in a right light. But, as I said before, I never would have advised her to marry him had he not been in such a
par-

ticular condition. No woman can be safe with a man who spends his life in ruining as many of her sex as are weak enough to be seduced by him. Neither her principles nor her honour are safe ; the first are every moment liable to be corrupted, and the latter violated. No woman can either esteem or respect a man who is destitute of every virtue. Nay, her character too suffers by her connection with him ; for the world is always kind enough to suppose that the woman who gives her hand to an avowed libertine, is not extremely nice in her notions concerning female reputation. Not to mention the many tedious, I may add, torturing hours, a woman so married must spend in reflections upon her husband's neglect or ill treatment, which are of themselves sufficient to embitter

bitter life, without being rendered more cutting by the calumny of the world. Melancholy experience, my dear Louisa, has taught me to give these salutary cautions to all my female friends who wish to be happy in the married state.



LETTER XVI.

From the SAME to the SAME.

Bellville is returned. I received the following account from him :

Lucy bore her journey beyond his expectation, but was very much affected at the sight of Lord Conquer, pale, and like the image of death. He seemed to have but just breath left to ask her pardon, and to offer the intended

ded reparation. She replied only with her tears; but readily gave her assent, when Mr. Myron asked her if she was willing to be married to Lord Conquer. A clergyman of my uncle's acquaintance—is he not a worthy uncle?—attended: a special licence had been procured, and Bellville joined his sister's hand to my Lord's. When the ceremony was over, Mr. Myron told Lucy, now Lady Conquer, when he had saluted her by her new title, joined to that of niece, that he would not detain her in so melancholy a place; adding, that if she chose to return to the *Wood* with her brother, he would take as much care of my lord, and of every thing belonging to him, as if she was present. The amiable girl however (I always saw that she loved him) with streaming eyes, begged she might

might not be separated from her husband (as he now really is) and declared that no affectionate care should be wanting on *her* part. In short, whether the surgeons were mistaken about his case, or whether Lucy's tenderness had any effect, we know not; but he mended greatly from the moment he was married. Possibly, *I* say, he may ere long wish himself fairly out of the world to be released from his wife.

Bellville staid two nights in town, and left *him* quite out of danger, and his sister altogether satisfied with her lot, for the present at least.

We expect Mr. Myron every hour: I wish he was come, for Bellville's mind is so much at ease about Lucy, that he has nothing to do but to dangle after *me*, and tease me for what I shall not grant.

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F

Mr.

Mr. Manwayring, his friend, is come to congratulate him upon this happy revolution, after so disagreeable an event; and the gentleman, who is indeed a winning man, has been pleading for Bellville these two hours.

I must fly for it *at last*. How ridiculous these men are!—I must speak to none unless I will admit them as lovers.—If they would let me alone; I might by and by love Bellville in my own way; but if I do I will never own my passion, and so he will not be much the better for it.

L E T.

L E T T E R X V I I .

From the SAME to the SAME.

London.

BELLVILLE and I have absolutely had a difference, and he has taken his leave of me in a pet:—yet I am not angry. I shall be in town for a few days.

I have called upon lady Conquer: my Lord is amazingly recovered. I wanted to see this new Benedict: I thought he would have rattled his chains by this time, but he appears rather more discreet than one could have expected him to be. If I am not an unskilful physiognomist his discretion will not last long.

The sweet, amiable Lucy, is the most engaging, the loveliest of women: with what joy did she fly to

F 2

her

her dear Lady Camilla ! (as she calls me) how blooming was her face ! how elegant was her figure ! what a vivacity sparkled in her eyes ! all her innocent mirth, her sprightly playfulness is returned. She is now but just sixteen, and as she is happy for the present, every thing about her gives her new pleasure. But a fine house, a number of servants, always at command, variety of elegant dresses, crowds of admirers whenever she appears, these, these Louisa, certainly conspire to dazzle a girl of *her* age, who was scarce ever out of her native village till she became acquainted with Lord Conquer, who seems neither much delighted nor yet displeased with her ; while she, with all the liveliness of youth, laughs and toys with him till she forces him to smile on her. She is indeed a perfect
Hebe

Hebe, and might most properly fit for the picture of that charming divinity.

She asked me several questions about her brother, her dear Charles, and wished to have the honour of calling me sister as well as friend : see how the pretty chit has improved her language. Lord Conquer keeps what is commonly called the best company in town; but what *I* call the very worst : to such company, however, his lovely wife seems to have no sort of aversion—We all love admiration too well—but I will take an opportunity to give my young friend a little advice: I hope she will not be too giddy to listen to it.

Your *last*, in favour of Bellville, made me smile: you are now, I find, become as violent an advocate for him as you were before for the Moyles,

and you know nothing concerning him but what I have told you; possibly too I have been too partial. Were he not a man, and consequently a fickle changeable creature, I might, perhaps, break my word, and—— but I know by fatal experience, that man is by nature false—with all his imperfections, he has, you see, still power sufficient to employ my thoughts, and to take up my time, or I should have told you ere now that I was astonished to behold Lord Stanfield come to Lord Conquer's while I was there: I had indeed heard that Lord Conquer, on falling, entirely exculpated his antagonist from having formed any malicious designs against him, owning himself the aggressor: this ingenuous proceeding had immediately brought the earl to visit him upon his recovery, and
the

the reception lord Conquer gave him renewed the intimacy which had subsisted between them.

Lord Stanfield was, I thought, rather sweet upon lady Conquer, and I believe I was very much in his way: he could have dispensed with my absence, for he began to grow more upon his guard, seeing me observe him.

Before I left them I took lady Conquer into her dressing-room, and desired her to pay a little attention to what I was going to say to her, as she well knew that I was her real friend.

She thanked me, and promised every thing I could desire ere she had heard my lecture, and was informed of what I intended to say.

I then told her that she was young, handsome, and above all

new: every young fellow would be talking nonsense to her, and that if she listened to them, she would be undone: "The young fellows, my dear, whom you encourage, continued I, will be ready to believe, after what has lately happened, that they may easily triumph over you; and the character of Lord Conquer will not tend to lessen their presumption."

She smiled, and said she was very much obliged to me; but seemed not to attend to me, as lady Conquer, in the manner she had done when Lucy Bellville: I therefore shortened my visit at that time, but not without resolving to see her again soon, and to warn her of the danger into which she seems, I think, ready to run headlong. Not that I really imagine that she will be ever, with her own consent, corrupted.—No—she still looks

as innocent as she is beautiful : but she is too young, and has had too little experience to be trusted without a friend to advise, to persuade, and even to restrain her, when launching out into the torrent of dissipation, without a guide. Her brother, next to her husband, who will, in a short time, if I am not much mistaken, give himself very little trouble about her, is the properest person : but it is a nice point to touch upon to *him* ; and I am at present quite out of favour, because I will not listen to the only subject on which he chuses to converse. Yet I will not give him up on his *sister's* account—I will not.

L E T T E R XVIII.

From the SAME to the SAME.

Oakly-Park.

I AM here again, and have behaved so very simply, that did I not believe a full confession of my follies some sort of punishment for the commission of them, I should confine them to my own breast.

I was not happy while Bellville shunned me: he told me just before I left the Park, that the continual sight of what he was never, he found, to possess, had increased his uneasiness so much as to make him determine to shut himself up, and try, by absence, to forget me ; such was his despairing speech.

Three

Three days had I been at the Park without seeing the least glimpse of him. I was, I confess, monstrously piqued at his folly, in persisting to keep so ridiculous a distance just as if I must be obliged to marry every man whom I speak to. I thought he would have come, only to enquire after his sister, as he knew that I intended to see her. That enquiry would have been the finest excuse in the world for the concealment of his inclination, if he really had any for me.

In short, I could not bear this nonsensical indifference any longer, and so I told my uncle I would take a walk with him to the *Wood* one morning.

When we arrived there, his servant conducted us into the parlour, and said he would let his master (who was in the garden) know immediately ;

ly ; but I stopped him. “ We will go and find him ourselves,” said I.

My good uncle agreed to my proposal, and discovered Bellville before I did. I believe I generally see as far as most people.

I wandered on, certainly quite lost in thought ; for I almost stumbled upon him, ere I knew where I was. On coming close to him (he lay upon the grass) I observed him looking earnestly on a miniature which he held in his hand—I could see it was the picture of a woman. I will not tell you how I felt, but I will own that I advanced as softly as possible, in order to discover who the favourite nymph was whose resemblance so rooted his attention.

He started up, and hustled the picture into his pocket, while I, shocked to death at being caught in acting with

with so much indiscretion, screamed, and ran away.

He pursued me, seized my hand, and gently drew me back, blushing at my folly, to a little green seat. He then expressed a melancholy kind of pleasure at the unexpected sight of me.

I believe I said, with an ironical smile, "that I was as little desired as expected."

"What cruelty!" replied he, "could you but be sensible of what I have felt, of what I still feel, on your account, you would not talk thus."

"*Your* sensibility, Sir," said I, rather warmly, "will not be much hurt, I imagine, on *my* account, while you have a favourite whose picture you carry in your pocket."

No sooner had I pronounced these words in the most fretful tone, than

he instantly looked like another man: instead of a gloom in his countenance, there appeared the most enchanting smile to be conceived.

With an archness which I never had before observed in him, "What would I not give, lady Camilla," said he, "to have my conjectures confirmed, and to be sure that you are really jealous."

You cannot imagine, Burton, how I looked: I almost think I hated him at that instant. I actually wondered at his assurance, and could not help crying out, while my face glowed with indignation, "Jealous, Sir!"

"Yes, my lovely creature," replied he, catching hold of both my hands, and looking eagerly in my face, "did you but know how this affected anger charms me!"

"The insolent," said I to myself, "now he appears in his true colours;

yet I could not help sighing at the same time, while I struggled to disengage myself, to think that I should be so grossly deceived in the only man of whom had I a tolerable opinion: I could not bear it—I broke hastily from him, and rushed into a little labyrinth to hide myself from the sight of every living creature, till I had recovered from the confusion which the consciousness of my silly behaviour had occasioned. Would you believe it, Louisa, I was weak enough to shed tears—my heart was so full it was ready to burst—I threw myself upon a seat in the most retired corner, took out my handkerchief, covered my face, and gave a free vent to the various sensations which distressed me.

Lifting up my eyes, after a heavy sigh, I saw Bellville at my feet, holding the miniature in his hand.

"Forgive me, my dear Lady Camilla," cried he, with a voice tenderly softened, "forgive me; it is your own sweet resemblance which you see—Did you imagine that I could admire any other picture but yours?"

"My picture!" replied I, with an affected disdain, though I never felt myself more at ease, "a very likely thing indeed! How should you come at *my* picture, Sir? I am as sure I never gave it you, as I am certain I never shall."

"Nay," said he, "now you carry your resentment too far; but if an ample confession of my fault would bring you to acknowledge sincerely, that you was provoked at my supposed inconstancy, and that you are happy in finding yourself mistaken, I am ready to give secret for secret."

Here

Here was an assurance!—I was indeed provoked, but it was at myself, for not having been able to hide the movements of my heart from this penetrating impertinent. I resolved, however, to punish him as much as I could—"Well," said I, "give me the picture, and tell me how you got it, and then I may possibly agree about what you ask."

"I will never resign the picture," replied he, "unless you promise to give me the original."

"Since then you are so obstinate," answered I, "take your own way."

Mr. Myron, at that instant, joined us, with Mr. Manwayring, who had been a few days with Bellville. The latter made a polite apology to me for his intrusion.

I assur-

I assured him, with all the gaiety I could assume, that his company was never more welcome, and that I was coming to look for Mr. Myron, who would, I hoped, make him go home with us.

“ Have you then engaged my friend ?” said he, looking at Mr. Bellville, who seemed to have lost his spirits on a sudden, and stood with his fine eyes anxiously fixed on *my* face.

I made no answer. Mr. Myron insisted upon their both dining with us. I was angry with Bellville while he believed he could do as he pleased with me; but the moment he looked unhappy, my heart was no longer at ease.

Just before we parted, as the gentlemen were to dress and come after us to the Park, Bellville, under the

the pretence of shewing me some very fine exotics which he had lately purchased, put the picture into my hand, and with the most dejected countenance imaginable, again begged my pardon for so clandestine a proceeding, but confessed, that as there was an eminent miniature painter down at Mr. Ogden's, who had taken several likenesses in a very striking manner, without troubling the parties to sit in form to him, he was strongly tempted to procure mine; adding, that since he was now perfectly convinced of his having no hopes to possess the original, he believed it his duty, out of respect to me, to resign the copy.—“Sure I am,” concluded he, “that it will be necessary for me, if I value my peace, to avoid both the one and the other as much as possible.”

I took

I took the picture: he behaved handsomely in giving it to me, did he not?

I said nothing *then*, but made him ample amends for my past carriage to him, all day long, by my good humour. Yet I could not bring him into spirits again, tho' I was strangely condescending: I talked to nobody but to him: I sung to him, walked with him in the garden, and lent on his arm.—Nothing will do, I find, if I don't marry him.—What a perverse creature it is!

In Continuation.

Bellville left us still melancholy; and I was——will you believe me? so silly, that I had half a mind to give him back his picture.

The next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, Mr. Manwayring
came

came in, as if by accident. My uncle was retired to his library. When I ordered the servant to tell him *who* was come, Mr. Manwayring stopped him, saying, that his visit was to *me*, if I would do him the honour to let him sit with me for half an hour.

I replied, that he would give me considerable pleasure by his company. His behaviour indeed is so polite, and his conversation so agreeable, that I have a better opinion of Bellville for his judgment in making choice of such a friend. However, I was not a little surprized at his opening, and you will, no doubt, smile, when I tell you that I have pitched upon *him* for *my* friend also : but you shall immediately know why.

He soon came to the point.

After a few well-turned compliments to my person and understand-

ing, &c. he added, "While I behold your ladyship with admiration, and listen to you with delight, I cannot help feeling the sincerest concern, that by a levity in your carriage, and a desire to give pain to a heart which doats on you to distraction, you should diminish the power of attractions, which, under a proper management, might render you superior to your whole sex. Excuse me, Lady Camilla," continued he, seeing me draw up a little, "but as you are the loveliest of women in your person, and the most entertaining of women in your conversation, I cannot but earnestly wish your mind was not so exceptionable as it is.—Your trifling with my honest, my amiable friend, Bellville, lessens *you*, madam, as much as it distresses *him*. He loved you as soon as he became acquaint-

acquainted with you. What man of his age and taste, with a heart disengaged, could behold you with indifference! And as you appeared neither coy nor cruel, he hoped, by a respectful tenderness, to gain your affections, but you refused him; and if you felt no inclination for him, you, by refusing him, acted honestly: but why, when he strove by absence to forget you, and drive you from his fond bosom, why would you again present yourself before him? Why will you, even at this time, pursue him, and force him to be miserable, by continually letting him see that he might, but for your coquetry, be happy? If you dislike either his person or his manners, you are certainly not to be blamed for rejecting him; but then leave him for ever, and do not endeavour, by every enchanting

chanting art, to make yourself still more lovely than nature has formed you: do not wantonly increase your power over a heart you every hour declare you never intend to accept of—Let me only ask you a couple of plain questions before I leave this part of the country. Do you not believe yourself guilty of inexcusable barbarity? and should you like, (admitting you were as capable of feeling the same passion for Bellville as he felt for you) to be tortured thus?”

These last words, full of just reproach, struck home.—Vexed to death as I was, I could not help saying, “I cannot imagine it possible for a man of Mr. Bellville’s understanding to love a woman void of sensibility, as he supposes me to be.”

While I spoke, Burton, involuntary tears rolled down my face, and

convinced this stern man more than a thousand words, perhaps, would have done, that he had mistaken my character. He actually looked ashamed of having treated me so harshly. He begged my pardon, but I could not articulate it: I was too much moved with the strong description of Bellville's uneasiness on *my* account; yet I wished to clear myself from imputations which I by no means deserved. I never was called a coquette: I always detested the name, and can truly say I never gave any man, whom I solemnly did not intend to marry, encouragement; nor did I by this carriage, which Mr. Manway-
 ing so vehemently condemned, mean to distress, or even to trifle with Bellville. I liked him—I am afraid I may add, I loved him, almost as soon as I saw him; and nothing upon
 Vol. I. G earth

earth but the certainty of my being unhappy in the marriage-state could have brought me to refuse him. This I often have told you, but you would never believe me; and this I told Mr. Manwayring.

“ And why, my lady, why should you be so certain of unhappiness, said he, with a man who has all the requisites to ensure the felicity of the woman who loves him ?”

“ I don't deny what you say about Mr. Bellville, Sir, I replied; I esteem him more than any man: and as I have so high an opinion of his character, and have had so many proofs of the amiableness of his manners, I wish to retain him as an agreeable acquaintance, as a valuable friend. One may certainly like a man's conversation, and yet not chuse to marry him.”

“ But

"But if Bellville, madam, said he, cannot converse with you, without feeling his passion for you increase, would you not discover a kinder disposition by shunning him entirely? Would you not also pay a properer attention to your reputation, by seeing him no more, than to encourage him to dangle after you, and occasion a thousand idle stories, which must lower you in the eyes of numbers, if not in the esteem of every body? You will, probably, tell me, that you despise the censures of the envious and the malicious, and I now believe you do not deserve them, because your intentions are not criminal: but I hope your ladyship will allow that it is better not to provoke the venomous tongue of slander."

"What then would you have me do, Sir?" said I.

G 2

"Why,

“Why, really, replied he, I would have you marry Mr. Bellville, who certainly loves you, and who, I will venture to say, deserves you; and if you are sincere when you declare you had no intention at all to flirt with him, why, neither he nor I, nor any person who has seen you together, can question your loving him. He has more than once flattered himself with the thoughts of having given you pleasure, and yet I know not a man in the world who has less vanity. When I have seen you solicitous to oblige him in numberless trifles, so desirous of engaging him in conversation, and so inattentive to all the company but *him* alone, how could I rationally suppose but that you were as passionately fond of him as he was of you!”

Here, Louisa, my face glowed like fire. What a strange unac-

countable man! To clear myself of this last charge, I told him the real truth. "I own, Sir, said I, that I had so much friendship for Mr. Bellville as not to bear to see him unhappy: whenever he appeared so, I took the methods you have just now mentioned to enliven him, and to draw him out of a melancholy which hurt me, as I was vain enough to feel myself the cause of it."

"E'en marry him, madam, marry him at once," said he. "I own, Lady Camilla, I have but a poor opinion of violent friendships between two young amiable people of different sexes, and will sincerely assure you, that I never yet met with an attachment of that kind which did not in the end make the man a villain, and the woman—something which I forbear, out of respect to

your ladyship to mention. But supposing it possible for a pure, refined, Platonic friendship to subsist between two people of different sexes, unconnected with love, yet, take my word for it, the world will certainly set them down for a couple of as downright lovers as ever followed the dictates of nature. Marry him, therefore, I say again, madam, or resolve to see him no more."

Bless me, my dear Burton, how this man flurried my spirits: I could not come to any sort of resolution one way or other. At last, after being closely pressed, I told him that I had been so unhappy in my *first* marriage, that I dreaded nothing so much as a *second*.

This declaration excited Mr. Manwayring's curiosity so much that he confessed himself very desirous of being

ing acquainted with the spring from which all my conjugal unhappiness flowed; and as I had no other apology to make for my rejection of Bellville, I complied with his importunate request: but as my narrative, for so it may, I think, be called, will not come within this sheet, I will send it in my next packet as I related it to him for your own inspection, as well as to prevent you from teasing me again with your interrogations concerning my reasons against a new engagement of the everlasting kind; reasons with which I have been till now too lazy to amuze you with.

LETTER XIX.

From the SAME to the SAME.

I Shall begin my little history at once, having a mortal aversion to long preambles.

You were, I believe, in France when I first married. My father, you have often heard me say, had a great desire to see me disposed of to his mind during his life; which desire, as I had lost my mother, was, they told me, a strong proof of his affection, and of his solicitude about me.

Mr. Myron, the eldest son of the late Lord Conquer, was young, handsome, and had all the advantages arising from fortune and fashion to recommend him to a gay giddy girl
of

of seventeen. He was also, or pretended to be, in love with me; so that being possessed of a great share of sensibility, and having no other attachment, I naturally—where is the wonder?—found him, in a short time, very agreeable; and as I received perpetual excitement both from his family and my own, to encourage my growing inclination, I set no bounds to it but those which the modesty of a girl, brought up with rather more restraint than women of fashion generally are, pointed out to me. I will confess, likewise, that though I had a thousand terrors at the thoughts of my change of life, yet my sincere affection for Mr. Myron blunted almost every other sensation but the pleasing one which I felt on going to be united to him for ever.

For about two months no woman upon earth was ever more satisfied with her husband's love than I was with Mr. Myron's; but after that time I perceived a considerable alteration in his behaviour to me. He was ever ready to frame some excuse to leave me; ever in pursuit of some new amusement; and whenever he was at home appeared either anxious and eager to be gone from me, or sullen and silent when detained by any accidental occurrence; for as to myself I never offered to dispute his pleasure in any thing. As I soon found that I was entirely ignorant of the art to keep him, I only strove, to the utmost of my power, not to disgust the man whom I could not possibly please. But though I was dumb and submissive in his presence, I gave way, in his absence, to my
dis-

discontent, and bitterly lamented the loss of a heart I had for a while believed to be in my own possession.—

Frequently, on his flinging from me with a chilling indifference which stabbed me to the soul, have I ran to my glass to see if I was altered: I beheld no alteration in my features but that which the disquietude of the moment occasioned: nay, so far was my countenance from having lost its animated complexion, or my eyes their lustre, that the former was heightened, and the latter grew more sparkling in proportion to the resentment I felt on being so cruelly neglected; in my own, perhaps partial opinion, so undeservedly.

I did not, however, depend entirely upon my opinion with regard to the change in Mr. Myron's carriage to me. Wherever I came I found

all the men unanimously of my way of thinking about it, and no woman had greater reason to be happy in her own eyes if the value of beauty was to be estimated by the number of its admirers.

We retired as usual to Green-lands, in N——shire, for the summer season. We were visited by all the neighbouring families, who, with Mr. Myron, were always scheming new diversions: but as we were left to be company to each other for many more hours than would have lain heavy on our hands in London, where people are continually coming in, I soon perceived that Mr. Myron was wearied to a degree with those hours of privacy and quiet, which, had he loved like *me*, would have been the most desirable ones of his life. At first I made no complaints; but neither
did

did I strive, I must confess, to diversify our amusements : I was piqued by his indifference, and foolishly fancied, that by unabated fondness, I should re-attach him to me.

The very method I took to carry my designs into execution, defeated them : he grew absolutely fatiated with the endearments of a woman whose person alone had charmed him, and having no taste for intellectual pleasures, he had no idea of that tender friendship which *only* can supply the place of mere passion ; and which, at all times, fills the heart of sensibility with raptures far superior to the highest transports springing from sensual gratifications. He languished for VARIETY, and repented every hour of having tied himself for life to one woman, as there were so many to be occasionally procured ; began

gan to fly from my careffes, and to appear totally disgusted with those little winning ways which had once so violently charmed him.

In consequence of his being heartily tired of his situation at Greenland, we removed to London.

As it was, I thought, my duty, as it certainly was my inclination, to accompany him, I told him "I was ready to leave a place which was no longer agreeable to him."

He coolly replied, "that I might do as I would; but that for his part he should not stay long in any place, and might, possibly, be not two days in town without changing his quarters, as the only pleasure in life was variety."

The negligence with which this answer was delivered, piqued my pride, and shocked my tenderness:
how-

however, I strove to conceal my feelings : yet, still wishing to find some remains of affection in him, I said, " Do you not, then, expect me to go with you ? "

" Why, no child," said he, picking his teeth, and but just glancing his eyes towards me, " a man would have a pretty time of it to have his wife follow him every where : that would be to drag his chains after him indeed, and mine are sufficiently heavy where they are, "

" You repent then already," said I, with my eyes full of tears, and my heart bursting with sighs, " of having married me ? "

With a smile of ironical pity, he replied, " Pretty fool ! and so you thought we were to live and love, and bill and coo to the end of the chapter : but don't cry, Camilla, I am
dead

dead-sick of the word wife just now ; by and bye, perhaps, when I have had a little change in my diet, I may return with as much appetite as ever, but then you must not expect it to last. You are young, and know no better, my dear, and are whimpering for your husband as if he was your baby."

It is impossible for me to describe the grief and indignation which I alternately felt during the utterance of this taunting speech. I never was inclined, and indeed totally unaccustomed to make sharp and ill-natured answers, (having being always reasonably indulged by those who had the care of me from my earliest infancy,) but I could not, so provoked, help replying, as well as my tears (for I was almost choked with them) would let me, " That I was sorry we
thought

thought so differently ; that I confessed that I was disappointed, as I had hoped, by marrying, to have found a tender friend, who would be as desirous of *my* society as I was of *his* ; that undoubtedly I was very young, but that youth was a fault seldom complained of in women ; and that as to my want of experience in life, I had believed I should, by marrying a man of sense and character, soon acquire knowledge of every kind, enough for the regulation of my conduct, which I should always try to render agreeable to the man who could be sensible of my endeavours to oblige him."

He looked at me with a contemptuous sneer while I was speaking, and then said, " you have made me a very pretty speech ; have a good opinion of your own understanding,

ing, and I am extremely happy in having met with a woman with so many fine qualities."

Any answer to this speech would have been superfluous, as it would only have occasioned a more stinging reply. Besides, my heart quite sunk within me at the treatment I had received, so very different from that which I had reason to expect from Mr. Myron's fondness for me, both before and after we were married. I therefore left the room to give an uninterrupted vent to my sighs and tears, which, instead of moving his pity, had only excited his mirth.

With a cool kiss and a "good bye, Camilla," he set out the next morning for London.

When he was out of sight my tears flowed afresh. I had flattered myself till there was no longer any

room

room for hope, that when it came to the point he would not be able to leave me in so short a time, after having appeared so excessively fond of me—Were I to repeat the rapturous expressions he made use of while he was permitted to visit me as a lover, and till within a week of his quitting Greenlands, as a husband, they would seem almost too extravagant to be credited.

I shut myself up in my room. I wept till I could hardly see, and feigned myself sick (I was indeed far from being well) to apologize for my not seeing company.

Three days I continued in this solitary state, preyed upon by melancholy and discontent. Then, wearied with dwelling upon nothing but what was disagreeable, I resolved to go in search of that peace which had
 flown.

down from me with Mr. Myron. Hope again prompted me to believe, that he might possibly, by that time, wish to see *me*, as much as I longed to see *him*. But I immediately checked *that* belief, by saying to myself, "Why does he not return to me? Why does he not at least send for me to come to him?" Thinking, however, afterwards, that he had in all probability only a mind to discover the strength of my affection, I ordered the carriage to be got ready, and prepared to follow him.

Just before I was going to step in to it, Sir George Powers, a young baronet, who had a fine estate a few miles from Greenlands, came to pay me the compliment of enquiring after my health, as he had heard Mr. Myron was gone to London, and had left me much indisposed.

I have

I made Sir George but a short reply, only telling him abruptly, that I was going to London; tho' he was a man on whom few women who had no attachments would have looked on with indifference.

My answer did not intimidate him. He told me that he was quite happy in being engaged in a journey upon the same road, as he should consequently have the honour of protecting me from any impertinence to which so lovely a creature, travelling with only a servant, might be liable to.

I replied, that I should be apprehensive of no insult in my chaise, and with my own people, and therefore would not give him the trouble of attending me. But there was no getting rid of him. He travelled as I travelled, stopped when I stopped, and among the number of flourishing

speeches he addressed to me, took care to mix a word of astonishment that Myron could leave such a woman in so short a time after being united to her.

I made no answer but with my eyes, full of scorn : my looks, however, gave no interruption to his proceedings. He attended me to the very door of my house.

As soon as I entered I was informed that Mr. Myron had just set out for Southampton.

This intelligence occasioned new sorrows to me : I had, however, no time to brood over it, as I received soon afterwards an express to acquaint me with my father's being dangerously ill. The affection of the wife yielded to that of the daughter. I flew to give him every tender mark of filial duty in my power ; but I was too late—He had lost his intellects

lects before I reached his chamber ; and I was left at little more than seventeen, without a friend in the world. I had, it is true, a numerous acquaintance ; but of what service are mere visitors in the hour of affliction ? people who only have been your companions in pleasurable parties, and who fly from the house of grief with as much celerity as if it was contagious.

You, my dear Louisa, were, at that time, with Mrs. Burton in France ; and if you remember, our intimacy did not commence till I became a widow.

I was now more deeply afflicted than ever I had yet been : and my afflictions were the more severe as my husband was not with me to lighten it by participation. Not that I wished to have him made uneasy : I only wished to have him to be so far sen-

sible of my distress as to be induced to use his utmost endeavours to remove it, or at least to render it more supportable.

As the death of my father made his presence in London necessary, he returned the day after he was informed of that event—But my hand is tired, my Louisa ; you shall have the remainder of my narrative in another letter.



LETTER XX.

From the SAME to the SAME.

[Continuation of the NARRATIVE
begun in the preceding Letter.]

WHEN I heard that Mr. Myron was at the door, I flew to him with open arms, hoping I might be permitted to shed my tears

tears on the bosom of the man who *had* been my lover, who *was* my husband, and in whom I wished to find a comforter, a protector, a friend.—But I was cruelly disappointed.

He slightly kissed my cheek, and cried, “What, always in tears, Camilla!—Come, come, my dear, dry your eyes, old people cannot live for ever—Here, Jones,” continued he, turning to his servant, “have you ordered my mourning?” Then re-addressing himself to me, “I think, child, you had better go back to Green-lands till we can appear in public; it will be mighty dull for you to be shut up in town.”

“Any place with you, Sir,” said I, sighing, “will be the most desirable place to me—I have no other friend—”

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“Friend!”

“Friend!” said he, repeating the word with a careless tone and half a smile, “what dost talk of friends for, child? The fortunate have always friends. You have nothing to do now, Camilla, but to please yourself. As I am assured of your discretion, I shall leave you to your own conduct, my dear.”

“Leave me,” replied I, “you don’t intend, I hope, Mr. Myron, to be so long absent again.”

After a loud laugh at my simplicity, I suppose, he said, “Why sure, child, you don’t imagine I am to be tied to your apron-strings—fond wives, Camilla, make cool husbands: but yet I protest, child, there is such a *Je ne sçai quoi* about thee, that let me die if I do not believe I shall never be tired of thee, though at present I am in chace of as fine a girl as—

Here

Here all my patience forsook me.

“ Do you tell me this, Mr. Myron,” said I, interrupting him, “ by way of consolation? or have you only a mind to try my temper, already terribly affected by the loss of the most indulgent of fathers, the best of friends?”

“ Ay, upon my soul, I did not think of that just now, I must confess,” replied he; “ but you are too serious to be in a humour for raillery, I see, and as I hate whining as I hate the devil, we shall be but stupid companions—I will therefore call at Lord Scamper’s and—”

“ Stay, Mr. Myron, said I, laying my hand on his arm; stay, and tell me if I have really done any thing to change your tenderness into this dreadful indifference; or does the very great alteration in your behavi-

our to me only arise from the natural fickleness of your disposition?"

"Entirely, child," said he. "No, no, I have just told you that you were mighty discreet—I would not have you imagine though that I am more fickle than any young fellows of *my* age and person, (surveying himself in the glass) all men when they have got the women they wanted, grow cursedly tired in a much shorter time than I have been, and so you will find when you come to know a little more of the world."

"I desire then never to know the world, nor man, nor woman, nor any thing," cried I, in a fit of downright despair: "since all my hopes of reciprocal affection with the man on whom my heart doated are vanished, I give up felicity for ever."

"Poor

"Poor girl!" replied he, with a sneering smile on me as I sat sobbing in my chair: "But indeed you are quite a spoilt child—Your head, Camilla, is absolutely turned. I am afraid you have read too many romances, in which the men are all drawn sighing, dying, lying dogs, and the poor nymphs soft, tender, melting things, my pretty Camilla; in which they talk of nothing but everlasting love and eternal constancy, and jumble together such a heap of inconsistencies, that it requires a very strong head to comprehend the meaning of them. Dry your eyes, dry your eyes, I tell you; wash your face, and see whether you look best with or without powder, and consult with your WOMAN what complexion will best suit with your fables."

The last sentence, by throwing into so ludicrous a light the solemn

appearance I was to make, deprived me almost of my reason, and drew from me an answer which I am as unable as unwilling to recollect. I remember only that the words barbarous, unkind, and injurious, were frequently repeated, and uttered with a voice so expressive of the bitterness of my grief, and the keenness of my resentment, that he replied, "If your ladyship is disposed to quarrel with me for endeavouring, by a little gentle raillery, to draw you out of your melancholy, I must quit the house, for I shall not stay to be insulted in it."

I cannot describe, my dear Burton, what I felt at this threat—*Now* I glowed with rage at his resenting a behaviour which he had, by his own wanton cruelty, occasioned; and *now* I melted in floods of tears at the thoughts of having lost a heart so lately,

lately, I believed, attached to *me* alone. But neither my tears nor my resentful looks had any effect upon him. He left me with indignation, and never returned the man I had once known him, the man I so ardently wished to see him.—Yet I could not drive from my breast the dear image of the once loved, once charming Myron—But the recollection of what I suffered with *him*, has made me resolve never to put it into the power of another husband to use me in the same manner. It was some time however before I had occasion to know whether I had strength enough to keep *that* resolution.

Mr. Myron left me agreeably to his menace, and I was really too much afflicted by my father's death to see company. I shut myself up, therefore, till I grew weary of my

being, and of every thing in the world.

After having lived in a very re-
cluse manner for near four months,
(during which Mr. Myron, who had
taken a girl into keeping, as I was in-
formed, called at home twice or
thrice, saw me, was barely civil, and
returned back to the place from
whence he came) I received my
friends, paid visits, and appeared now
and then in public : but I soon ex-
perienced all the ill-consequences ne-
cessarily arising from an union with a
man of loose principles.

As I was still young, and from
the behaviour of the men not fright-
ful, I had a numerous train of ad-
mirers ; too many of whom, presum-
ing upon the indifference and neglect
of an inconstant husband, formed
hopes as injurious to my honour as
their

their freedoms were disagreeable to me. Whatever you, my *friend*, or Mr. Manwayring may think of me, from my partiality to Bellville, I have no idea of any passion that is not attended with respect and esteem, neither of which could accompany an inclination for a woman already engaged by the most sacred ties. Mr. Myron's infidelity would not authorise a breach of the marriage-vow in me, supposing I had been inclined to infringe it : but I actually loved Myron, loved him notwithstanding all his coldness and his contempt ; even notwithstanding his detestable principles, which deprived him of the real, substantial, and permanent happiness arising from virtuous love, to which he was ever a stranger.—Oh! Louisa ! with what flattering expectations did I enter into the marriage state with him !

Among the fighting dangles who crowded round me, Sir George Powers was the foremost, and would not for a considerable time (though he had vainly attacked me before I came to town) relinquish hopes which could never be gratified ; so that I was at length forced to retire into the country, and almost shut myself up, before the ridiculous herd of coxcombs could believe it possible for a woman in the prime of life, and wedded to a man totally insensible and negligent of her, could be so very coy to every man but *that* husband, who might have been, I will venture to say, the happiest, as well as the most beloved of men, had he been able to subdue passions which only hurried him to his destruction.

A violent fever carried him off in less than a twelvemonth after our marriage.

He was brought home dangerously ill to his house in Grosvenor-street. I hastened to town with my heart once more beating with hope, that he would be restored to my prayers; that my solicitude for his recovery, my constant attention to procure him every thing most conducive to his ease and felicity, would revive a passion which had so long lain dormant, but he appeared almost insensible to every thing during his illness, and expired without discovering any particular marks of satisfaction or any disgust to me.

I will not pretend to say that I as deeply regretted him as if he had loved me better; but I felt enough to make me desire to return to my retreat, in which I happily became acquainted with *you*, my dear Burton, my agreeable, chearful neighbour and

friend. *You*, ignorant of the real motives by which I was actuated, insensibly drew me from retirement into the world again. From your real affection for me, which made you wish me happy, and from your sincere opinion that my happiness could not be so complete while I am single, as if what you call well married, you proposed openly to me Lord Stanfield. Finding me not to entertain sentiments in favour of his lordship, you endeavoured to persuade me to like a connection with his brother: your designs have both proved unsuccessful, because I do not approve of the characters of the men, and because I am convinced by fatal experience, as I have told you before, that the woman must be miserable who is wedded to a man void of honour. Mr. Bellville is the only man
I have

I have met with who appears possessed of those principles which can alone render him fit to be trusted : but even those principles cannot keep his eyes from wandering to, nor his heart being charmed by, a new object, though they may prevent him from indiscreetly indulging his passion ; and I freely declare to you that though I very ill supported Mr. Myron's neglect, I should feel Bellville's indifference so much more acutely, that it would, I fancy, bereave me of my reason. Should I not therefore be guilty of the extremest folly to deprive myself of the tranquillity which I at present enjoy ?

This question, which I put to Mr. Manwayring at the close of the above narration, was immediately answered by him in the following terms :
 “ Your ladyship then, by your own
 con-

confession, must certainly feel a much stronger passion for Mr. Bellville at this moment, than you ever felt for Mr. Myron."

I blushed like scarlet at this home truth, but was silent.

"And do you not think," continued he, "that you will discover great weakness in depriving yourself of a certain felicity, by not consenting to be the wife of a man whom you love, and by whom you are tenderly beloved, only from an irrational apprehension that this man should behave like Mr. Myron, who is totally *un*-like him in every respect. If you cannot indeed be contented with a husband, unless he is always in ecstasies and transports, you will undoubtedly be disappointed; but if you can be satisfied with a tender unalterable affection, a sober, set-

settled esteem, you will, I venture my life, be happy with my young friend."

"That Mr. Bellville will always treat me with good manners, Sir, I am very ready to believe, and if I fall not into errors, through perverseness, he will, I doubt not, think me worthy of his esteem. So far I look upon him quite superior to Mr. Myron, or I could not have so high an opinion of him: but the best of men cannot help being delighted with one woman, and disgusted with another—Bellville, should he behave to me ever so well, yet at the same time liked another better (and jealousy is eagle-eyed) would make me the most miserable of women. Shall I not therefore act more prudently never to expose myself to such a hazard?"

"Doubt-

“ Doubtless, Madam,” replied he, “ if your fears are too strong to be conquered ; but then you ought, in honour to yourself, and pity to *him*, to break off an acquaintance that can be of no service, and that only tends to make him very wretched, as he cannot converse with you, without finding his passion increase too much to let him enjoy any peace unless you were kinder ; whereas time and absence might make him think of some other woman when you have banished him from your society.”

I made no answer to this speech : but I shuddered at the conclusion of it—What will become of me, Burton ? You will, I know, call me capricious : I know that Manwayring thinks me so ; and perhaps I am, for I can neither be happy with Bellville, nor without him.—His friend,

friend, however, took his leave of me with great politeness, and said that if I could pardon the liberty he had taken, with the sole view of serving his friend, he would intreat me to give him leave to visit me sometimes.

As I really could pardon very readily every thing he had spoken but what related to *that other woman*, I replied, "that I should be glad to see him among my other friends."

Now tell me freely, Burton, what you think of all this.

LET-

L E T T E R XXI.

From the SAME to the SAME.

I AM in London, but weary of the place, weary of myself, weary of the whole world.

I staid three or four days after Mr. Manwayring's visit at the Park, but heard no news about Bellville. He has been trying his friend's *recipe*, I suppose, *another woman*, and has succeeded.—Well, be it so—a man who could change so soon could not be violently in love, and consequently would not have suited me—I was right, you see, to refuse him—Yet—Oh, Louisa! I must tell you all my folly—what have I not felt during these melancholy tedious hours.

I arrived in Grosvenor Street more dead than alive, my first visit was

to lord Conquer's. Bellville's lovely likeness, his dear thoughtless sister, is become a woman of the world, and makes herself mighty easy, I believe, about her husband. She loves him too, I fancy, in *her* way; but she will certainly not pine herself to death at his inconstancy. She gives him, I dare engage, "sufficient encouragement to be fickle. How beautiful did she look! She flew to me with smiles so like her brother's, that I almost thought I saw *him* in *her* cloaths. Sweet girl!—But she is no longer the amiable rustic which I formerly so much admired—She has caught all the elegance of a court: but with its elegance she has caught, I am afraid, all its follies. I will not say any more concerning her, till I make farther observations on her behaviour.

She

She pressed me to stay dinner, and I complied, hoping to have the whole day to prate of Bellville ; but how was I mistaken !

We had scarce been alone a quarter of an hour, when there entered a crowd of morning visitors : my lady *this*, and my lady *that*, with lords, baronets, colonels, &c.—a curious *melange*, I assure you—With each of them her young ladyship was quite lively, easy, and familiar, ready to entertain, and to be entertained.

As I sat silent, being willing to make all the remarks I could, Lucy told me I was grown very serious, asked me if I was not well, and tried to exhibit *me* as well as *herself* to the company ; but her efforts would not do—However, I promised to be of her party to the opera, not from the slightest inclination to appear in public,

lic, but purely to watch *her*, for I do not think that she is in a right way.

In Continuation.

I returned from the Opera-house out of humour with every thing. My once innocent Lucy is become an ar-rant coquette, but one of the most enchanting ones that ever existed. Your old friend, lord Stanfield, is still buzzing about her, and my handsome gentle Edward too seems to be quite taken in : he did not appear to be so when he saw her in the country ; but men are given to change.—I don't think she is averse to *him* neither ; and yet I swear, I believe, from what I have seen of her behaviour to lord Conquer, that if it had been possible for him to make a good husband, she
would

would have made one of the best of wives; but being left to herself, as my lord was always flying from her in pursuit of new pleasures, she was soon surrounded by pretty fellows, who practised every seducing art to render themselves favourites in her eyes, and there are, I think, now small hopes of her reformation. For her own sake however, for Bellville's sake, I will make an effort to save her.

I endeavoured to let her see, by my carriage, that I did not approve of her trifling with the men, but she paid little regard to me: I was indeed so teased all the evening by the provoking assiduities of Lord Merton, whom I met at Lady Conquer's the day before, that I was prevented from doing what I designed.

The moment the entertainment was over Lord Merton took my hand,

Stanfield and Moyle each seized one of Lady Conquer's, and so between the two brothers, the beautiful laughing little hoyden was led to the coach, the rest following.

As the men supped with us there was no speaking *that* night, though I was determined to outstay them, through real charity to her, and would willingly have sat up till morning could I have hoped to gain the point I so earnestly wished for.

Before they thought of going, in came lord Conquer.

Lord Stanfield ran to him with open arms. We have just come from the Haymarket, my Lord—I have taken care of my Lady.

The husband, for George was at that moment perfectly a *married man*, with a surly air replied, "I am obliged to you all, gentlemen, for taking

king care of my wife,"—softly adding "d—n her."

Looking round, he saw me.

"Lady Camilla, too!—I can trust *her* with your ladyship."

Lucy then went up to him, and taking his hand, cried, in a wheedling tone, looking fondly at him at the same time, "and can't you trust me with any body? not your own Lucy! Come Georgy, sit down, you look fatigued—bring up the supper again." (speaking to the servants.)

She then sat down by him, threw her pretty white arm round his neck, and in a soothing voice asked him if he was not well.

"Coaxing huffy," said my lord.

The men took the hint, all rose, Lord Stanfield said he should go out of town next morning, and Lord Merton begged Lord Conquerto give him leave to wait *my* hour of returning

ing home, that he might attend me.

“ Oh ! to be sure, my lord,” replied he, gravely bowing, while I insisted upon his not staying for me, as I knew not when I should go, and had servants.

The peremptory air with which I spoke those words, made Lord Merton, I believe, think it best to move off; though he looked as if he could be exceedingly troublesome.

When Lord and Lady Conquer and I were left, my lady, with great good-nature, strove, by a number of little attentions, to please, and to bring him into humour; but he was rather peevish: there was something, however, so extremely winning in her manner, that it was almost impossible to resist her. Yet, I confess, I

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should

should have thought a little more reserve, even to her husband, before other men, would have been better. The grossest men seldom overlook, or fail being disgusted with the least indelicacy in their wives ; but this poor young thing has been entirely spoiled by marrying such a man as Lord Conquer, who treated her from the first like what he designed her to be, only his mistress. That treatment, and the frequent visits of his debauched companions, have given her unbecoming airs—I don't say that she has lost entirely the look of innocence and modesty, which was ever so sweetly charming in her, and which would melt any heart but Lord Conquer's. He is, I think, almost weary of her ; yet, might he not be recalled by a discreet behaviour ? At least her flirting with others will

will only drive him still farther from her.

As soon as I got rid of Lord Merton, I left them, and went home, determined to call the next morning, and talk very seriously with Lucy.

I went early, and was surprized to find Moyle sitting close by her, with a book in his hand, to save appearances, I suppose.

She was in the most elegant undress that could be fancied, and reclined in an easy chair. On my entrance she made a motion to rise; but I desired her not to disturb herself, as I concluded she was not well, from every appearance of ill health, except in her countenance, which never looked more brilliant.

“What a rosy bloom indeed!” cried Moyle, gazing eagerly on her,

while he softly pressed her hand,
 “ yet what a delicious languor is
 there in those charming eyes !”

“ Pshaw,” replied she, withdrawing her hand, and patting *his*, “ what nonsense—But indeed, my dear lady Camilla,” continued she, “ I am almost dead with the head-ach—(by the way she is with child)—My lord, you saw how he came home last night, has not had any rest, and I rose early to send for some advice for him.”

“ What, is he sick then? said I.”

“ Yes,” answered she, “ he drank too much last night ; has had doctor Faddle this morning, taken a draught, and is now trying to compose himself.”

I lifted up my hands and eyes, while Moyle endeavoured to bring us into something like conversation.

Lucy was ready enough; but as he found *me* very reserved, he soon took his leave.

Rejoiced at his absence, I now thought I had gained the wished-for opportunity, and asked Lady Conquer how she came to admit Moyle when my lord was ill, and herself alone.

With all the *naïveté* imaginable, she cried, "I quite forgot to send down orders to the porter, to be denied to every body, and Moyle is always calling upon us: we don't make any stranger of him."

"So I find," replied I.

"But we have nothing to do with his visits, for I dare swear he only comes to see your ladyship."

"And do you not conceive the danger," said I "of letting such a fine young fellow visit you at all hours? and when my lord is sick, or when he is abroad?"

“ I declare I never thought about him,” cried she : “ he is lord Stanfield’s brother, you know, who is Lord Conquer’s friend, and *my* friend also ; and I cannot well differ with a man of family to whom I am under such obligations.”

“ A discreet woman,” replied I, “ will be under obligations to nobody but to her husband.”

“ Well, but my dear Lady Camilla, you know that I was unfortunately circumstanced, and that he was of great service to me.”

“ Those obligations, as you call them, will, in his opinion, be cancelled by that part of his behaviour which deserved them, if he is a man of nice honour. No man ought to reckon upon a service done to a woman in distress, because it may be impossible for her (as in your case) to repay him
for

for it but by general civility; and indeed to a generous mind, the remembrance of a good action is a sufficient reward for it. When we are urged only by mercenary motives to do good, we hardly deserve thanks for doing it. No, my dear Lady Conquer, the pleasure arising from having been serviceable to another, is an ample recompence."

"Well, I don't suppose" said she eagerly, "that they expect any thing but politeness; they are certainly intitled to that."

"And so you would think yourself unpolite, by refusing to see Mr. Moyle, Lord Stanfield, or indeed any man when you were alone, attending on my lord, or at any other improper time."

She blushed a little, and cast down her sweet eyes: then raising them

up all at once, she threw her arms round my neck, and with a smile of simplicity and good humour—(Oh how like her brother did she look!) cried, “My dear Lady Camilla, don’t be angry: if I have been wrong, I am very sorry for it—I am indeed.”

“Bewitching girl,” replied I, “don’t say a word more to flatter me from my purpose. I came to talk seriously with you, to tell you in how dangerous a situation you are, merely for want of reflection. As you are so young, and so pretty, and married to a man so careless of his own reputation, you ought to be the more solicitous to preserve *yours*; for such men are but too often the first to condemn the very faults in their wives of which they are guilty themselves, and the readiest to be disgusted at them. I have known many a sober
man

man put up with, and excuse failings in a woman, for which a libertine would have almost murdered her. Consider, therefore, my dear Lady Conquer, before it is too late, how difficult it is, with the nicest and most guarded behaviour, to escape detraction. Can *you* then expect to escape who think not at all about it? I will believe you intend no harm at present; but that unreserved behaviour, that easy, playful familiarity with men, artful enough to seize an opportunity so heedlessly given them, may, in the end, prove fatal both to your character and peace. You will say possibly, that my lord's neglect authorizes you to receive the politenesses of other men; but take care, *his* errors can never apologize for *yours*—We are only answerable for ourselves. Besides, by a more circumspect and discreet carriage, you

may, in time, make my lord so sensible of your superiority in point of merit to the women with whom he associates, as to gain him entirely from them, and fix him yours for ever : and from what can a woman derive more honour, than from her having been able not only to preserve her husband's heart, but to lure him from his vices, to render him happy here, and worthy of felicity in a future state ?”

Here I stopped, that I might not overwhelm her with more than she could take in at once.

She thanked me for my friendly admonitions and gentle reproofs ; but they made, I thought, little or no impression upon her. I did not, however, take leave of her till I had pointed out even the minutest dangers to which her unaltered conduct might

might expose her ; and begged her, with all the warmth of friendship, to resist, at the very first, every excitement to improper pleasure. "By improper pleasures, my dear, I mean those" continued I, "which tend to make a woman deviate from the paths of discretion. As a woman you should oppose, with all your strength, every temptation to such pleasures ; and as a wife you should doubly fortify yourself against them. Above all things avoid the slightest appearance of evil : many a married woman has lost her reputation without having her virtue impeached ; and consequently with her reputation, the affection of her husband and the esteem of her friends."

I am indeed very much afraid that this unthinking creature will occasion great uneasiness to her family ; and I

actually tremble at the apprehensions of what I foresee, but what it will not be in my power to prevent.



LETTER XXII.

From the SAME to the SAME.

I HAVE visited Lady Conquer almost every day since I wrote to you. Notwithstanding the sly insinuation in your last, I have been unlucky enough never to meet with Bellville. I have indeed often, very often, met Lord Merton, who applies himself so assiduously to please me, that if I cannot make him sensible of his inability to touch my heart, I must give up my favourite scheme upon Lucy, who has so far
forgot

forgot her brother's interest, that she has even solicited me on Lord Merton's account. What a poor giddy creature she is grown ! and so I told her, adding, that after my having refused Bellville, she might be assured I should never have any body else. Yet, Merton, I believe, thinks to win me by downright obstinate perseverance. He studies my taste and my humour in every thing, finds every thing to admire in me, and nothing to disapprove of—Oh ! how soon would the tables be turned, were I inclined to take him at his word ! but I detest those flatterers. I see my own faults, and love them best who point them out to me. Men who say just as I say, and do just as I do, are mere shadows : one may as well converse with one's own image in a glass, as with such insipid echoes.

I have no creature to speak to here:
I must go down to my good Mr.
Myron again.

Bellville has quite forgot me: he
will not accept of me *only* as a friend
—Manwayring does not approve of
such friendships—He had better
have conversed with me upon my
own terms—He might have, by
this time, perhaps—but I will not
discover all my weakness—I know
that I am excessively out of humour
just now: nothing pleases me; nor
do I imagine that change of place
would mend me—I would have—
I don't know what I would have---
I would fly from myself—I can write
no more now—I will throw away
my pen, and not take it up again
till I am capable of saying some-
thing less trying to your patience.

In

In Continuation.

How dreadfully have I been alarmed!—I am scarce yet sufficiently recovered to tell you what has happened.

I went yesterday morning to Lord Conquer's, as usual—Her pretty ladyship was sitting in the midst of some of the gayest fellows in town.

Lord Merton flew to place me most agreeably to himself, that is, where he could have a seat by my side. I know not what was the matter with me, but I was not in spirits to make the accustomed resistance to his tiresome sociitude about me. I felt an unaccountable *nonbalance*. I was absolutely inattentive to all that he was saying, and he could draw from me only monosyllables.

On

On a sudden, Lady Conquer, starting up from her chair, asked me if I had got the fine agate box, mounted in gold, which she so much admired, in my pocket, as she wanted to shew it to Sir William Wilbey. On my replying in the affirmative, the baronet rose to look at it, and after it had been handed round the room, to the ladies, as well as to the gentlemen, it came into Lord Merton's possession, who said so many fine things about it, and kept it so long, admiring its beauties, that I began to grow tired of listening to him.

Turning to speak to Lady Susan Joylove, who should come in but Bellville.

I felt my face in a glow, and drew out my handkerchief to hide it, while he paid his circular compliments, not forgetting me among the
the

the rest. "Who is he?" whispered Lord Merton, "he is a very pretty gentleman." "Lady Conquer's brother," said I, with an emotion which I strove in vain to suppress.

Merton looked at *him*, and then at *me*, with eyes, as if he wished to dive into my soul. You cannot think how I hated him.

All at once, recollecting my box, which I had forgot, I asked him for it.

"I know not how to part with it," replied he, softly; "do, let us make an exchange: I have one which I brought from Paris, which I am sure you will like better."

"Indeed but I sha'n't," said I, and therefore, give me my own."

"Never," answered he, looking at me in a very insolent manner; "I will keep

keep it, out of a tender respect for the dear hand which gave it to *me*."

"I never gave it to you, Sir," replied I, loudly; "and I *will* have it."

"Why then, positively," said he, between jest and earnest, "I will not part with it."

"Not part with it, my lord!" said I, full of anger and disdain; "not part with my box, which you received from one of the company, only to look at it."

"No! never!" answered he, pressing my hand; "but you have my heart, my soul, and all that belongs to me in return."

"You grow insolent, my lord," said I, raising my voice, and struggling to get from him.

Belville, at that moment, starting up, and flying cross the room to us, cried, "What's the matter, Lady Camilla?"

Camilla? Will you give me leave to offer my service?"

"Nothing, Mr. Bellville," said I, trembling.

"Nothing! surely you would not be thus alarmed about nothing?"

"It is certainly nothing to *you*," Sir, replied Merton; "though it is very impertinent in you to interpose between a lady and me."

"The impertinence is entirely on *your* side," said Bellville, in a tone which increased my terrors; "I shall therefore insist upon your complying with the lady's commands, whatever they are."

"I have no commands, Bellville," answered I, hardly able to articulate these words, through tenderness and fear.

"I shall not be dictated to by you, Sir," said Merton, fiercely.

"You

"You *shall* return the box to the lady, if she chuses to have it," replied Bellville, fiercely.

"I *shall*, Sir!" said Merton, quite furious with anger, "I am not used to take such language; nor *shall* you dare to give it me with impunity,"—drawing his sword half out of the scabbard, at the sight of which I screamed, and laid my hand on Bellville's arm, to stop him; but *his* sword was out in a moment.

The men interposed, the women shrieked—I more violently than the rest—they made, however, passes at each other before it was possible to separate them.

Lord Merton's sword pierced Bellville's side; but on his drawing it out, Bellville had address enough to disarm him, while he, foaming with rage, was held by Sir William, Colonel Pike, and Moyle.

Frantic with my fears, I ran to Bellville, and forgetting who was present, cried, "My dear Bellville, are you not dangerously wounded?—For heaven's sake," continued I, to Lady Conquer, who was in tears for her brother on the other side of him, "send for a surgeon directly."

"There is no occasion for one," said he, leading me to a sofa, and sitting down by me, it is nothing but a scratch. "But you are very much frightened, Lady Camilla: I sincerely ask your pardon; but I could not stand tamely by and see you insulted."

I was indeed ready to faint! I was never so ill.

The men, who all condemned Lord Merton's rashness, ran for drops, &c. &c. Bellville held one of my hands in his, and with the other,

other, an eau de luce bottle to my nose. His tender sollicitude, and repeated assurances that he was not much hurt, soon restored me.

Lord Merton, having been in the mean time convinced by Sir William and the Colonel, that the warmth of his temper had hurried him to act in an unjustifiable manner, and that his whole behaviour had been extremely indiscreet, came to us, (with a very ill grace, I thought, and a mortified countenance) made a compliment to Bellville, and restored my box to me, with an apology for having detained it.

I made no reply: I hated the sight of him, and only intreated Bellville to let a surgeon see whether he had received much hurt.

While I was speaking, the surgeon came, and Bellville withdrew with

with the gentleman into the next parlour.

They soon returned, and said, that the wound was a meer trifle; of no sort of consequence.

Lady Conquer would have persuaded her brother to stay and take up his lodging with her while he remained in town; but telling her that he had promised to be at Manwayring's, who was hourly expected in town, and that he must go immediately, he took leave of us. But though Lord Merton had made his adieus before, I could not suffer Bellville to depart till he had assured me this affair should go no farther.—I have a thousand fears, in spite of all his assurances—That ever I—I who have so true an esteem for him, should have endangered his life! The thoughts of having endangered it
distract

distract me—I send John every two hours to know how he does.

In Continuation.

Soon after I sat down to breakfast, though I could not touch a bit of any thing, Bellville entered the room, and almost overturned the table, by his precipitate advances to me.

I scarce knew what I said or did; but I know he caught me in his arms, with a warmth and eagerness he had never before attempted, and which friendship, I thought, would not allow of; therefore broke from him—"Hold, Mr. Bellville," said I, with all the resolution I could muster up on such an emergency—"Mr. Bellville!" replied he—stepping back, and looking petrified at my

my coldness---“ I was your dear Bellville yesterday.”

“ Oh ! don’t talk of yesterday, said I---yesterday I was frightened out of my senses, because I thought you was dangerously wounded.”

“ Would to heaven,” said he, “ I had been covered with wounds to have kept your tender fears for my safety alive—the gentle pity which you yesterday so charmingly expressed---”

“ Horrid !” said I, with my eyes full of tears, occasioned by the dreadful ideas which he had raised in my mind ; “ do you then wish me so ill as to see the brother of my Lucy in that terrible condition ?”

“ I know not what I wish, replied he, coolly, since I can never, by my most ardent passion for you, nor by any other means, warm your heart

with sensations equal to those I feel at this instant in my fond bosom."

An impertinent morning-visiter, as soon as he had pronounced these words, entered, and staid such an unconscionable while, that Bellville got up (in a pet, I suppose) and left the room with an indifference (real or affected) which mortified me beyond expression.

I had no peace all day—no rest all night—not having time even to ask him how he did—I never was so disturbed : I waited all the next day, expecting to see him every hour, but was cruelly disappointed—I neither eat nor slept—I dreaded some new mischief.

In the evening, I went to lady Conquer's—she was abroad.

The next day passed in the same manner—with this difference only, she

she called on me, to tell me she had been to see Charles, and that he was better.

"Has he been ill, then?" said I, trembling, while I waited for her reply.

"No—only with his wound," answered she, carelessly.

"I thought it had been too slight to be attended with any disorder."

"I can't tell—he said he was better; but as he expected a gentleman about business, I did not stay."

This account increased my anxiety: it was too late when she left me to send to him—I blamed myself exceedingly for not having sent to him before.

I closed not my eyes all night. As soon as I rose, I dispatched a servant immediately: the answer was, that he would wait on me in a short time.

The moment he came in, he looked so pale, so altered, that my first words were, " Why did you come out, if you were ill : I did not know of your illness—pray go home, and take care of yourself."

" There needs no care now, said he, but my wound, though a very slight one, bled again, soon after I left you that morning, and I was obliged to keep within doors."

You cannot conceive how this speech affected me—I made him no answer. I sat down, and leaning my head on my hand, wept bitterly: I could not hide my tears.

" How inconsistent is your behaviour, Lady Camilla, said he: how unnecessarily do you torment yourself, when it is in your power to give yourself instantaneous ease."

" Gracious G—d ! replied I, can
I cure

I cure your wound—I was indeed the first cause of it, and am therefore so grieved, that I rather would have died, than have occasioned such an unfortunate affair.”

“ You dear deceiver,” said he, throwing his arm round me, and laying his face close to mine, “ how can you say you would have died to have prevented my receiving any hurt, when you, by your constant refusal of me, give me infinitely greater pain of mind than I ever yet endured. No, Lady Camilla, you only fancy you pity me: did you really *feel* for me, you could not thus persist in making me wretched.”

You cannot imagine, Burton, how these reproaches struck me. I could not bear them—“ What must I do, then, said I, to convince you, incredulous as you are, how much I

esteem you, and how I trembled for your safety?"

"Promise me now, this instant, to be mine," said he—

What could I do? or what could I say? I had gone too far to recede; and yet I was ready to die with apprehension, while he hung over me, waiting for my answer.

At last, in a voice inexpressibly soft, while his penetrating eyes read every secret of my heart "tell me," cried he, only tell me, could you have been so alarmed about a man whom you had not loved?

My face and neck were crimsoned—I replied---"Well---I do---love you; and, to give you the strongest proof that a woman ever gave, I will consent to be wretched myself, if my wretchedness will make *you* happy."

My

"My dear Camilla," replied he, gazing on me with transport, "why wretched! Can you possibly be so with the man whom you, according to your own confession, love? You cannot conceive how that insinuation damps my delight."

"I shall not yet, perhaps, be wretched," said I, sighing, "but when you grow weary of me— Oh Bellville! the terrifying apprehension of such a moment almost bereaves me of my understanding."

"Banish those apprehensions, banish every intruding fear, my life," replied he, pressing me to his bosom, "and think only of love and joy. My angel, my Camilla, how can you suppose that your Bellville, who doats on you, who adores you, will ever change, will ever love you less than he does at this transporting moment?"

I said little to him, Burton : I have given my word ; I cannot go back ; I wish not to deceive him ; I love him but too well—Heaven grant that I may be able to keep a heart so very dear to mine ! so absolutely necessary to the continuation of my existence !

LETTER XXIII.

Mr. BELLVILLE to Mr. MANWAYRING.

I HAVE gained her at last, my dear Manwayring : the lovely, amiable Camilla. I cannot now stay to write particulars : besides, I expect you every moment in town, and wonder you are not yet come.
Let

Let this spur you, to share my happiness.

You know what a delicious creature she is; yet she is now a thousand times more charming: now, as she no longer strives to hide her love, but suffers me to bury her sweet blushes in my bosom, while she confesses all her tender sensations. What nervous sense! what uncommon female softness!

You are not to be told, my friend, that I am a very sober fellow; were you, however, to see me at this time in my extasies, you would not, I am afraid, be so ready to vouch for my sobriety as you *have* been: I am almost tipsy with joy, and yet this lovely woman will not permit numberless endearments which I am now, I think, authorized to seize, and about which the extreme deference I pay to her amiable delicacy might

hinder her from being alarmed. But though I see, and have long seen that I am beloved by her, I am sure she consented at last with reluctance. She is still apprehensive of meeting a second Myron in me. If I know my own heart, her apprehensions are all groundless: though she will hardly, I imagine, place any confidence either in me or her own charms, till we have been married these ten years. People, it is true, *have* changed in the marriage-state, after a long union and a very happy one: a passion kindled by beauty alone, may indeed be expected to grow weaker and weaker every year; but when virtue, delicacy, and discretion, all combine to render the most elegant of female forms irresistible, the admirer of that form, with such additional advantages, must surely have

have a very depraved taste, if he is at any time prompted to wander in search of a new object.

As Lady Camilla's fortune, exclusive of her jointure, is superior to what in the common way of negotiating I had reason to expect, I would make a settlement, sufficient to convince her that love alone, detached from any lucrative views whatever, urged me to offer my addresses to her: but this design must not be divulged till it is carried into execution.

I am thoroughly persuaded that this intended step will meet with your approbation. I had always the happiness of thinking with *you* on subjects of this kind. - But come and tell me that you approve of my measures in person. I have no time for letter-writing; I must fly to my Camilla.

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L E T T E R XXIV.

Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE to
Mrs. BURTON.

The Wood.

IT is all over, my dear Burton. I have given up my liberty in presence of his and my friends, to the man who is—I have all the reason in the world to think, so deserving of my heart.

My good Mr. Myron acted as my father upon this occasion, and expressed as much satisfaction as if he had been equally related to us both.

When the ceremony was over, which made me tremble, he took hold of my hand, and said, “ Now, Lady Camilla, you have conducted yourself agreeably to the good sense I
always

always thought you possessed of : you have made the worthiest and most amiable of men, one of the happiest ; and I will venture to answer for your increasing felicity, with such a lover, friend, and husband united."

I blushed, while Bellville almost devoured me with caresses, for which I chid him severely. The most violent love soon cools. But I am his wife ; therefore let what will happen, I cannot recal what's past. Heaven, who sees my inmost thoughts, knows how dearly, how truly, I love him, and how well he merits the kindest returns I am capable of making.

He has acted nobly with regard to the settlement, presents, &c. I was not surprized at his generosity, but I did not imagine that he had been master of so large a fortune. Mr.

Myron

Myron has indeed very well accounted for it, by telling me that he has always been (though of a very benevolent temper) an exceeding good œconomist ; and that, by not running into the many follies which impair the constitutions, as well as drain the purses of most of our young men of fashion, he has not only enjoyed a considerable share of health, but very much improved his estate. So that I find we, with our taste for retirement, shall have more than sufficient to gratify all rational desires.

Bellville begged me to go down immediately to the *Wood*, that he might have me entirely to himself: I consented because I chose to be out of the way of general observation. With such a companion, indeed, every place must be delightful, especially the spot
which

which derives all its charms from his cultivating hand.

We wander about like the first happy pair in Paradise ; but I must shorten our stay ; a too long residence may strip our Eden of half its beauties ; and should I once let Bellville grow weary of me here, he may never be able to endure the sight of me, or of this place again. But I wrong him, at least for the present ; after every momentary separation, he flies to me with new ardour.

You will naturally ask me, “ How comes he then ever to leave me at all if he loves me so ardently ? ”

His frequent absences are of my own contriving—I scheme our separations, meerly for the sake of beholding the transports in his eyes when he returns to me. He quarrels not a little with me, whenever he sees

through my designs. But the satisfaction with which I receive him again, and the continual variety I am every hour making in my dress, my looks, my language, and my manners, in order to fix his heart, seem to bid fair to preserve it in its present state; that is, without the slightest inclination to wander.

But we have yet seen few days in matrimony—I am sure, however, his dispositions is very different from Mr. Myron's. His manners are perfectly delicate, and his principles unexceptionable: on them alone, I mean his principles, I build all my hopes of happiness. The woman who marries a man of a contrary character must be, some time or other, exquisitely wretched. Her honour, her reputation, her health, her peace of mind, are all in danger
of

of being destroyed. How very careful, therefore, ought every woman to be in making the strictest enquiries into the morals of the man who addresses her, before she consents to be married to him! Men are, in general, the most finished hypocrites; the most artful deceivers—But my Bellville's heart is as pure as his person is pleasing: the former is adorned with every virtue, the latter embellished with every grace.

I would fain have persuaded my lovely sister to come down with us, as well to vary the scene a little, as to snatch her for a while from the pursuit of pleasure, which seems, at present, to overpower her reason, and to render her deaf to the voice of discretion; but I could not prevail on her. I am very much afraid that she is unwilling to leave Moyle--I wish I may be mistaken.

taken. I desired her brother to insist upon having her company; but he did not go about it with any spirit. He told me, indeed, that with *me* he enjoyed all the satisfactions of life, and that no other woman engaged his attention—Will he talk in this style three or four years hence? I must not expect such language—if he will then be only my friend, Myron not even condescended to protect me, but left me to my own conduct, which would not, I doubt, have been blameless, had not disappointed love given me a distaste to every thing. I should think it would be of the greatest advantage to lady Conquer to retire for a while from the public eye, and lead a life of privacy and quiet. In *her* condition, such a perpetual hurry, up from one amusement to another, may throw
her

her into embarrassing situations, and, not improbably, be attended with fatal consequences. Lord Conquer may, perhaps, be weary of his wife; he will, I fancy, be still more so if she brings him not an heir.

I have just received your congratulations: you tell me you have written to Moyle about my sister: I wish he may pay a proper regard to your necessary and wholesome advice.



L E T T E R XXV.

Mr. BELLVILLE to Mr. MAN-
WAYRING.

The Wood.

I AM the happiest of men, in the possession of the dearest, the loveliest of women. Never wa
loveliest

there so beautiful a creature—and she is as good *within*, as she is attractive *without*. Never any body had so many winning ways, and she varies them so agreeably, that she heightens the lustre both of her virtues and her charms. There is but one part of her amiable character which deserves, I think, the charge of inconsistency—At the very instant she expresses a satisfaction almost bordering on rapture with *me*, my house, gardens, and every thing about her here, she urges me to leave *them* and herself; or else to carry her to some other place.

When I was so urged the other day, I replied, “From the pleasure which you have declared at your situation, my dear Lady Camille, I am willing to hope that there is nothing disagreeable in it.”

“No,”

"No," said she—"I doat upon the *Wood*; but I shall doat upon it still more when I return to it, after an absence of a month or two."

She shall be obeyed. I will go with her any where---every place with *her* must be preferable to an elysium without her.

She makes a visit to Mr. Myron's, at a time when I have laid out some scheme to pursue at home, which will, she knows, prevent me from attending her conveniently; and there she stays four or five hours with him, and is frequently shut up with Miss Greaves, who is not in the least entertaining. On these occasions, however, I break through every engagement to follow her, as I cannot be happy long without her. She either refuses to come down to me, or looks on me as if she wished

I had

I had not come in her way. Yet, I am sure she loves me—almost beyond expression—for one day when I complained more warmly of her unkind proceedings than I had ever ventured to do before, she discovered so much concern for having rendered me uneasy, and was so uncommonly tender and endearing, that I told her, if she made such sweet and ample amends, I should be tempted to differ with her continually, for the sake of so delightful a reconciliation.

She laughed at me, threw her snowy arms round my neck, called me the best of creatures, and then, as if all at once recollecting herself, withdrew her arm, assumed a very grave face, and talked of matters as foreign to love, as if she had never entertained the least idea of that passion :

passion : and thus will she behave just when I most wish to enjoy her dear society alone.

She has made me promise to go to Brighthelmstone, though she knows that I have no taste for the fashionable watering-places ; and I have as often heard her declare, that such places are most disagreeably dull and tiresome to her. Come down, therefore, my good Manwayring ; be a witness to my happiness, and assist me in persuading my Camilla to increase it, by giving me still more of her enchanting company, where I can enjoy it with the least molestation.

We had a long argument upon this subject yesterday : she maintained that love is like a standing pool ; that it will stagnate if it is not agitated by the breath of variety ; and that even when
ruffled

ruffled by a brisk gale, it is productive of more pleasure than if totally becalmed. On the contrary, I asserted, that a regular, constant passion, for a favourite object would not only be kept alive, but would also be raised to a greater height by a proper quantity of fuel, and discover no tendency towards extinction.

“What!” cried she, “do you compare your passion to the asbestos, which tho’ continually thrown into the flames, comes out not only undiminished, but still purer than it went in?”

“Undoubtedly, my dear Lady Camilla,” said I, “for my love, the more it is indulged, grows warmer and brighter.”

A smile, which makes her look more beautiful than the “laughter-loving Dame,” and a kiss sweet beyond

beyond description, commonly end our disputes. Yet though she always manages them with humour and wit, I wish she would not, by frequently flying from my arms, occasion my calling forth her talents to defend a conduct, which cannot, I think, be properly defended. I love her too fondly, too ardently, to bear with patience these interruptions to my conjugal felicity.

Come, my friend—she admires, she reveres you—come and convince her that it is impossible for her to love her husband too well.

C. B.

VOL. I.

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L E T T E R XXVI.

Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE to
Mrs. BURTON.

WE were, agreeably to my request, going in a great hurry to Brighthelmstone; but our journey was put off.

While I was in town, making some few preparations, Lady Conquer's servant came to let me know that she was taken very ill, and that it was believed she would soon be in labour.

While I was hastening out of my dressing room, Bellville met me.

"Whither are you going, my life," said he, "at this time of night?"

"To my sister," replied I, "who is extremely ill."

" I am sorry to hear you say so; but you must give me leave to detain you in your own house; in the first place because I love you too tenderly to suffer you, in *your* situation, to be fatigued; and in the *second*, because you will, being both a couple of novices, frighten each other. No, my Camilla, let Lucy send for the most experienced matrons among her acquaintance; but do *you*, my love, rest contented in *my* arms at home: dear as my sister is to me, I cannot risk my Camilla's safety for her."

Do you know, my Louisa, that I am all obedience to this dear charming man, who has discovered such uncommon, such tender anxiety about me, since I have been in a state so new to me, that I cannot sufficiently repay his kind attentions.

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In short, Burton, I do not well keep up my design of being indifferent or capricious, in order to make variety: his excessive affection and melting persuasions, added to the many forcible reasons which he produces to prove the necessity of my complying with his will, quite overcome me, and make me very yielding to his wishes. I am indeed blessed beyond my most sanguine expectations, in my dear Bellville—I never believed it possible for a man to be half so amiable

In Continuation.

My sister is safely delivered of a son: my Bellville himself carried me to pay our congratulations. “I will not trust you by yourself,” said he, “these idle, prating women, will only

only put a thousand more apprehensions into your head, than are in it already—how considerate ! how tender ! how different from Lord Conquer !

We found his lordship sufficiently negligent both of his wife and his heir, though he discovered more satisfaction at his being a father than I expected. But neither the birth of his son, nor the confinement of his Lucy, can bring him to spend much time at home; and she, who has of late lived so dissipated a life, bears the gloominess of a sick chamber very indifferently. She has intreated me so earnestly to come and see her often, that I believe I shall stay in town a week or two longer on purpose. She is surprisngly well, considering all things—The boy too is the finest and healthiest child I ever saw.

L E T T E R XXVII.

From the SAME to the SAME.

BY complying with Lady Conquer's request to see me frequently, I have had several opportunities to talk more seriously to her than I have done concerning her conduct; which, though not according to my real opinion, intentionally blameable, certainly *appears* to be highly so. But she has not yet paid much attention to me.

Yesterday, instead of making a direct answer to what I said to her, she fell into a number of little compliments on the fancy of my dress, and asked me where I bought my cap, which was, she said, most elegantly pretty, and who made my *negligee*, tel-

telling me at the same time how sweet a filk it was.

“ My dear Lady Conquer,” said I, “ leave off trifling, and let me know sincerely, whether you did not love Lord Conquer when you married him ?”

“ Undoubtedly !”

“ And do you not love him now ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Why then do you, by living almost in public, and encouraging visits from all the idle fellows in town, give *him* reason to believe that you are weary of his company, and *them* room to imagine, that they are as welcome to you, if not more so than my Lord ?”

“ My dear Lady Camilla,” replied she, with a smile which added new graces to her lovely features,

“ what would you have me say to you? I am always pleased to see my Lord when he is either reasonable or good humoured; but were I to sit at home, waiting by myself, till he was the one or the other, I might stay till I was dying with the vapours. When my Lord carried me from my brother's, no man could be more fond, nor obliging: he was the same for about a week after we were married: but from that time to this, his house and his wife have been, I believe, equally indifferent to him; every place where I am not in his way is agreeable, and every woman he meets with is preferred to me. And would you, my dear, think me prudent in teasing him to alter his behaviour, when I know he never can bring himself to make a change in it; or sit down in the *pouts*, and by weeping myself blind,

blind, tell the whole town that I am neglected by my husband? Not to mention the entire ruin of my person, which would not, I imagine, help to recall him, I am sure such a conduct would encourage all the fellows to suppose that they should be well received; nothing in the world being so likely to facilitate an affair with a married woman, as the declared neglect of her husband."

"My pretty sister, thought I, is grown wonderful knowing—how astonishingly company and admiration *improve* a woman!"

"Well, but my dear Lucy," said I, "are there no methods left to reclaim this wanderer, and lure him back to that love which he first discovered? It were, methinks, well worth while to endeavour, by every soothing blandishment, every modest

L 5 endear-

endearing art, to make him sensible that he will be mistaken, if ever he expects to find a woman of your age handsomer, and more desirous, as well as more capable of pleasing than yourself."

"How you talk, my dear Lady Camilla:" cried she, "married as you are, to a man who adores you, who never did, who never *can*, love any other woman, you fancy it is a mighty easy matter to please one's husband, because you find it impossible to displease Charles—But, indeed, my good sister, were you married to Lord Conquer you would soon feel the difference; and, feeling yourself in *my* situation, would act consequently as I do."

"Never," answered I, with an earnestness which plainly shewed an entire condemnation of her carriage.

"Why

“ Why, how would you act upon such an occasion ? ”

“ As I did when married to Mr. Myron,” said I. “ Finding myself utterly unable to make him sensible of the undeserved neglect with which he treated me, I ceased to appear in public, lived retired, chiefly in the country, and confined my conversation to *his* relations, and a few select female friends of unblemished characters, by which means I totally escaped the aspersions which calumny might have levelled at me : had I hurried into connections of all kinds, without making any distinction among my companions ; had I appeared every where, with all sorts of people, and flirted with every pretty fellow who came in my way—”

“ My dear creature,” interrupted she, “ you were, I am sure, ever discreet,

creet, and indeed *I* always *intend* to be so, though I am sometimes a great deal too giddy. But when I get abroad you shall see a great alteration in me for the better."

No body who had seen her at that moment would have scrupled to declare that she was the very image of innocence, the picture of truth. She was sitting in an elbow chair, in a white flowered lutestring negligee, a fine blond hood was crossed under her chin, the lappets were pinned up, part of which hung over her forehead, sometimes hiding, sometimes discovering her dark brown hair, and gave an elegant appearance to her figure, making it look still more beautifully picturesque.

At that instant Moyle, who had not, I found, seen her since her lying-in, entered the room.

She

She made a slight motion to rise, but he, seizing both her hands, which never, I thought, looked so deliciously white, stopped her, and with a tenderness in his eyes and manner, gave her joy on the birth of her son, and her own recovery, asking if he might not see the little stranger.

The boy was brought, and placed by the nurse in Lady Conquer's lap.

He kissed him till I really fancied, as well as his mother, that he would have smothered him.

"Hold, hold," cried she, laughing, "you will hurt my little George. I declare he is almost stifled," continued she, kissing him herself, while Moyle almost devoured her with his eyes.

However, seeing me observed him — for I actually began to think that
the

the scene grew too interesting—he again turned his attention from the mother to the child. I told him that I imagined he had not been used to make many visits of that nature, and advised him not to repeat them.

He then became less particular ; but I saw plainly that he was very much charmed with her ladyship, and that she did not behold *him* with indifference.

Where will this end? I am truly in pain for her—What mischief may not Lord Conquer have to answer for, on account of his conduct towards this lovely and once innocent girl? *Once!*—let me hope she is so still—let me hope she will ever be so. Even now, I actually believe that if Lord Conquer returned to her with his first fondness, and treated her with all the affection she had reason to expect, she
would.

would think no more of Moyle, nor of any other man, but would be the best of wives and mothers. When a husband indeed is absent, and a handsome insinuating fellow throws himself continually in his wife's way, her conjugal fidelity is, no doubt, severely tried.

Have you, my dear Burton, written to Moyle?—if you have not, let me beseech you to write immediately—but say nothing about me. Neither must I mention this affair to my dear Charles: the communication of it may be destructive to his peace, and perhaps endanger his valuable life. He has the highest sense of honour, and a great regard for this poor, thoughtless, but lovely girl.

LET-



L E T T E R XXVIII.

From the SAME to the SAME.

I THANK you, my dear Burton; your talking to Lord Stanfield, who is now so near you, and persuading him to write to his brother, may be better than your doing it yourself. Men are perverse creatures, and so vain of their imagined superiority over us, that they will listen to their own sex, when they will not pay the slightest attention to a woman, though she may deliver her sentiments with as much propriety as any lord of the creation whatever,

ever, and most probably with far more gentleness.

I hear that Lord Stanfield has carried off a young girl of education, though with but a slender fortune; and that his elopement with her is really his business in Ireland, given out at this time—Fine fellows for husbands, these Moyles!

Indeed, my Louisa, you were strangely out in your men. I was only a week at Brighthelmstone: I don't want to stay long in a place. By keeping Bellville always amused, I hope to keep him always mine. There is a transport in that thought which would animate me almost to any thing: though indeed he is so unalterably kind, that I begin to fancy he will ever love me as well as he does at present; or at least I am inclined

inclined to believe, that when the raptures of passion subside, a steady friendship will succeed them, not to be impaired by sickness, age, absence, or time. Pray heaven it may prove so ! and that I may not deceive myself. But should I, after all, experience the so much dreaded change from fondness to indifference—I shall, however, have the satisfaction of knowing, that as I made choice of a man of the strictest honour, *that* honour will preserve his esteem for me, and the esteem of one virtuous man is more to be prized than the love of all the libertines upon earth. My heart may pine for the loss of the tenderness which was more valued by me than my life, but it can never upbraid me for having chosen a man for *passion* alone ; and as love
without

without esteem can neither be satisfactory nor permanent, I shall hope, by my unwearied endeavours to deserve the latter, to secure the former to the latest hour of my dearest Bellville's existence.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.